

THE TOUCH BOARD

indian
montessori
foundation



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AMI Online Sports Fundamentals Certificate Course

- Vidhya Ramalingam

“The program made me realize that once we seed sports into children in their early stages, throughout their life they will keep exploring their limits and interests related to sports” - Chareesh Shankar Kenche, Fundamentals Course Participant

Movement in the Montessori environment is inevitable. When this movement is further extended in the form of sports, its benefits are many, as mental health and physical activity go hand in hand. Keeping this in mind, the Montessori Sports Fundamentals Course brings a student-centred approach to sports environments and brings sports to the very core of child development.

The online course is a 40-hour programme which provides basic knowledge on how to integrate sports into Montessori environments across all planes of development. The course topics include Montessori education and sports, the importance of sports in contemporary society, systems of sports education, movement across the planes of development and preparing the sports environment.

Shahini Akula, an Elementary teacher shares how sports can be introduced in the Montessori schools without the need to have any special large area. It is about how the trained adult guides



Montessori Sports founders, Ruben Jongkind and Patrick Oudejans, have formalised their partnership with Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), who have accredited their Montessori Sports Fundamentals Course.

children’s natural movements in a constructive path. She further adds, *“The adult need not be a sports person to teach sports. She should be active, energetic and spontaneous with children.”*

The course is very flexible and can be easily understood by any Montessori trained adult as to how to observe sport sessions, what to observe and acquire basic sports skills to present to the children. Josephine Ramya, a Primary directress feels that for someone who is new to Montessori, the course offers a clear understanding of the physical and psychological characteristics of the children in the different planes of development and how sports can be a joyful learning experience instead of it being a chore or a parenting goal to learn a sport.

Integrating sports and Montessori keeping the key principles of the prepared environment will benefit the children and the community as it fulfills their need for movement and the choice to do it at their pace and their ability.

Workshops - Chennai

- Aditi Ganesh

Navadisha Montessori Foundation (NMF) conducted online workshops in December and January where AMI Primary Trainers Rukmini Ramachandran, Ruby Lau, Hemalatha Rangarajan and Ramya Sridhar shared insights about the way of the child.

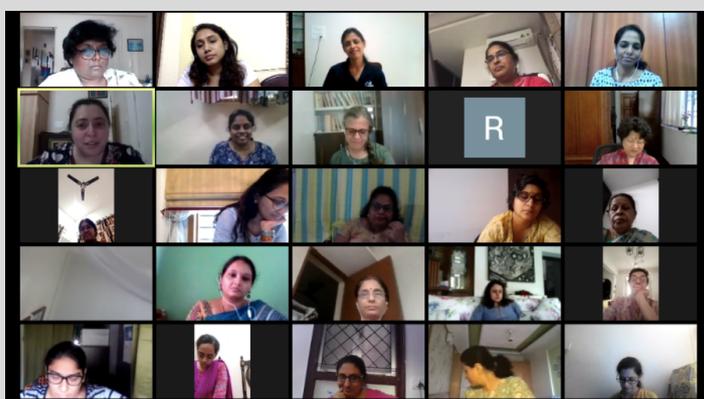
While ‘Montessori at Home’ focussed on various aspects of Montessori which can be practiced at home, especially during the time of the pandemic, ‘An Introduction to Montessori Education’ presented key philosophical ideas and basic features of a Montessori environment.

To Aparna Sridhar who firmly believes that Montessori is a way of life and doesn’t need a classroom to be implemented, the workshop highlighted the amount of thought that needs to be put into setting up the appropriate environment for a child, be it at home or school. Aparna Raghavan, another participant, appreciated how even definitions and excerpts from Montessori books were discussed with everyday examples.



IMF Talk

- Meera Ghelani



The Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) organised the first talk of the new year on January 9, 2021. AMI Primary Trainer, Teenaz Reporter spoke with 200 keen participants from different parts of the country about ‘Supporting Freedom and Discipline at Home’ and how this can lead to universal love and peace. *“I learnt a lot about how to inculcate self-discipline, address our child, how to give them the freedom to make decisions and a lot more”*, shared an enthusiastic Montessori parent, Kruti Bhat.

“Arriving at discipline is the work of the child alone, through his own effort. Our role and responsibility is to prepare ourselves and an environment in which the child is free to do this work of self formation.”

Teenaz Reporter

Sejal Shah from Mumbai adds that the talk led her to realise how unknowingly we are constantly interrupting children during their conversation and later on we wonder why the child is shy or constantly looking for support while talking.

What's in the IMF Store ?

In the quest to bring Montessori philosophy and principles to families and communities and supporting schools and training centres in their work, the Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) has on sale Montessori books, didactic language material and furniture that aids independence in young children.



Children's Furniture

The search for suitable furniture for children is a daunting task in the world for adults but is of great importance to a young child's developing independence. IMF offers a variety of about 30 infant furniture including tables, shelves, wardrobe, bookshelves, stools and more that are invaluable additions to homes and communities. Information of a few are as below.

ALL THESE MATERIALS CAN BE PURCHASED ON THE WEBSITE
WWW.MONTESSORIINDIA.ORG !



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Wooden frame and a mattress made from natural material for placing on the floor for the child to sleep. The child can get in and out of the bed without restriction.

Dimensions - 43" (L) 25.4" (W)

Price - Rs 8,400

Steps

Sturdy multipurpose steps that can be placed anywhere from wash basins to shelves to be accessed by the child.

Dimensions - 6" (First Step H) 14" (Second Step H) 15.4" (W)

Price - Rs 7,700



Wall Hung Bookshelf

A bookshelf which can be hung low on the wall on which books can be placed invitingly in a way that the cover page is seen.

Dimensions - 18" (H) 30"(L)

Price - Rs 3500

Stool

Stools with handles and with a flat top that can be easily carried around by the children. Dimensions - 4.3" (Seat H) 10.5" (L)

Price - Rs 1420



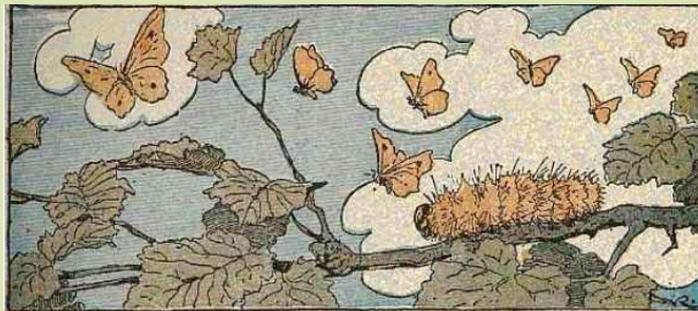
POETRY CORNER

The Caterpillar

Christina G. Rossetti

Brown and furry
Caterpillar in a hurry;
Take your walk
To the shady leaf or stalk.

May no toad spy you,
May the little birds pass by you;
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To live again a butterfly.



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WORKSHOPS & TALKS



S.NO	DATE	TIME	ABOUT THE EVENT
1	02-Feb-2021	4 PM-5:30 PM CET	<p>Preparing the environment for the 0-3 child</p> <p>The Montessori Institute of Prague is organising a free online talk 'The informed adult and the 0-3 environment' for parents with Heidi Philippart, AMI trainer in the Assistant to Infancy level. To register, check the link - https://amiprague.cz/0-3-montessori-environment-course.../</p>
2	12-Feb-2021 to 15-Feb-2021	Visit https://whova.com/web/virtu16_202102/	<p>The Montessori Experience 2021</p> <p>Association Montessori International USA (AMI/USA) & AMI Elementary Alumni Association (EAA) are excited to host a virtual Montessori Experience. The year 2020 has been full of transitions — on a local, national and global scale. Many of these transitions have required unfathomable feats of adaptability. To register check out the website https://amiusa.org/event/the-montessori-experience-2021</p>
3	27-Feb-2021	9 AM-12 PM IST	<p>Parenting Challenges in the Global Village</p> <p>Parents are facing many challenges to support children in the extremely complex world that we live in, join AMI 3-6 Trainers, Rukmini Ramachandran and Ruby Lau who will discuss some strategies to steer children towards a successful life, in an online workshop conducted by Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF). To register for the workshop by visit https://montessori-india.org/event/parenting-Challenges-in-the-global-village/</p>
4	27-Mar-2021	4 PM-5 PM IST	<p>Offering useful and necessary help to children</p> <p>It is difficult for any adult to witness a child struggle. Out of love, we strive to provide everything we believe that the child needs and much more. Is the child's effort important, and in fact necessary for the child's healthy development? Hemalatha Rangarajan, AMI Primary Trainer, will help us begin a journey of learning to step back and doing things with the children instead doing for them. To register, visit https://montessori-india.org/event/offering-useful-and-necessary-help-to-children/</p>

Mindful Practices

- City Reporters & Archana Narayanan

In our world today, there is an urgent need for practices stemming out of awareness and love. Through this segment we hope to build a bank of ideas towards sustainability that have been adopted and shared by schools and teachers.

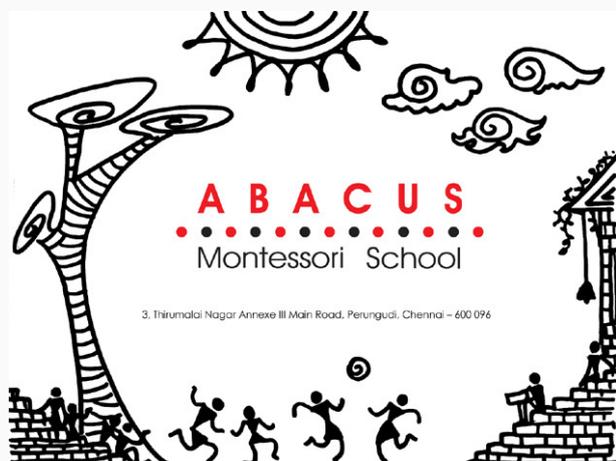


As a community, with so many of us functioning together, generation of waste might be inevitable. But the management of the same lies in our hands. When we analyse the contents in our dustbin, we will realise that most of it is not landfill waste. So, what are the systems that can be adopted to reduce, reuse and recycle? Here are some ways in which schools deal with their waste.

- Beginning waste management with waste segregation - having separate containers to collect wet waste, recyclables (paper, metal, plastic, glass), e-waste, landfill waste
- Partnering with a local kabadiwala (scrap dealer) who collects recyclable waste periodically
- Composting wet waste using a stack composter, compost pile or vermicomposting
- Buying in bulk or using refill options (Eg. Cleaning liquids)
- Using cleaning equipment that are eventually compostable (Eg. Wooden handles, coir bristles, cellulose sponges, loofah scrubs)

Do you have a system of waste management that you follow in your school? Share your thoughts with us at thetouchboard@gmail.com

*We thank Prakruthi Montessori House of Children, Redwood Montessori School, Sparkles Kinder Kastle, Mindstein Montessori, Krtsa Montessori and Anthea Montessori House of Children for their input.






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The Racing Mind of the Second Plane

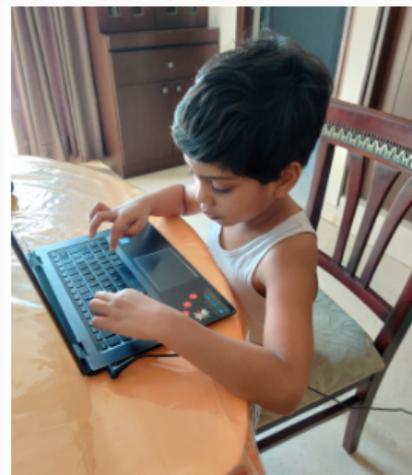
In this segment, Prasanna shares her thoughts and experiences of the elementary child of six to twelve years and how adults can support their racing mind and growing social and moral independence.



Prasanna Srinivasan has completed her AMI Montessori training at both Primary (3-6 years) and Elementary (6-12 years) levels. She belongs to the very first batch of both the courses at Navadisha Montessori Foundation. She has worked with children from both age groups in India and abroad and has been working at Navadisha Montessori School with elementary children since 2016. She enjoys using her spare time to read books. She feels extremely grateful to be working with children and loves the fact that this age group can have conversations just about anything in this world and their quest for information inspires her...

Working around technology

We live in a world where the Internet and technology has become inevitable. We are now able to organise our whole life - groceries, buying clothes or books, watching movies, without having to step out of our homes. For many of us, this increased use of technology can be attributed to the current pandemic situation our world is confronted with. Some of us have gone from being technophobic to techno savvy and it means a lot to think about our behaviour with the use of technology. We are relying on technology now more than we ever did. What does this change mean for our elementary age children?



The years between 6 and 12 is the age for logic and reason. It is the age for imagination, intellectual exploration and building relationships beyond family. They want to find out how their family functions, how society functions, rules that govern their family and society. They also want to become effective contributors in their family and society too. They learn by observing and studying our behaviour.

As parents or caregivers we have to be conscious of our use of technology. We need to harvest on those characteristics of reasoning, imagination and intellectual exploration in guiding our children to become independent yet safe with technology. Our children need to understand technology as a tool that we use for different reasons. We have to help our children understand how to use this tool - just like we would show them how to cut vegetables or how to cook the rice for a meal. *“This is the word document. You can use it for typing stories, essays, letters. This is the save button. It saves your work from getting deleted. This is how we create the document.”*

It is also important to let them know what we are doing when they start seeing us use the technology. *“I am ordering a book online, since it is not available in the bookstore near us. I have been waiting to read it.”* This way they see us using the technology for different reasons. It is around how we use this tool that they structure their values for it.

We have to help our children engage actively with the technology using their reasoning and imagination. *“You made a lovely cake the other day, would you like me to show you how to type up the recipe. If you write it down in your notebook, you can look at it and type it”*. If they happen to gather information on a topic they are working on, it is still important that we have books available for them.

If we are resorting to an online search for that topic, it is useful to show them how to do a search, what keywords would help. It is important to stay with them when they are starting a search. It is also helpful to make a list of websites that could be trusted for accurate information.

Having conversation around why we think a particular website is useful than the other will also help them understand the reason and logic behind our search. It could be a skill to develop.

As with anything, rules around use of technology at home have to be created and followed. It is important to involve our children in framing these rules. While doing so, it is important to ask questions that will allow our children to think about their use of technology. *“How much screen time do you think is appropriate? What time during the day would you be using it?”* If we expect them to reduce screen time, it is important to think and discuss possible alternatives for it along with them. We must support our children with a consistent routine in the way we use our technology. This will equip them to handle technology in a responsible manner in their next stages of development.

Nurturing Independence - A Parent's Experience

- Meera Ghelani

From birth, the child is on a journey of discovering himself and achieving varying levels of independence. The foundation of Montessori education is to support this child of immense capabilities in his quest of ‘Help me do/think by myself’. In this series, parents share their experiences of witnessing the child’s growing independence.

Yadika Sharma, mother of 4 year old twins Aveer and Zaina recalls how at 19 months, the twins attempted to eat by themselves. *“I think this was just a month into their Montessori program. We served their lunch while they were sitting in their highchair and usually they are fed. But that day they both refused to let anyone feed them! Even though they struggled with keeping the spoon straight and there was a big mess all over, they ate their entire meal on their own!”* Yadika adds that it was lovely to see them concentrate and try again and again to put the food into their mouth without any frustration.



The school also helped Yadika to take these principles home, providing guidance in involving them in daily life activities be it sorting vegetables, sweeping floors or washing the family car. *“It was great to see them learning to be independent so early on in life.”* She also speaks of times when she did want them to hurry or do something another way that did not go well with them and so eventually she realised that she has to accept who they are and guide them as best as possible.

She reveals that she chose this program to allow the children to guide their own learning process, feeling that having two children of the same age and different personalities was going to have its own challenges. Having experienced Montessori, she is immensely surprised at the self-confidence it has given her children, wishing that there were more elementary Montessori schools that would further this learning.

Minds behind Books

An Insight into Indian Authors and Illustrators of Children's Literature

- Roopa Sundar



Asha Nehemiah

“

Often parents are so worried about children learning numbers and recognising shapes or alphabets, that they overlook the fact that the desire to read text is intensified when the payoff is sheer fun for the reader.

”

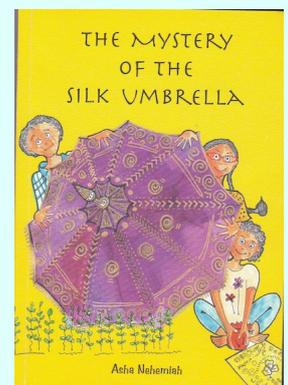
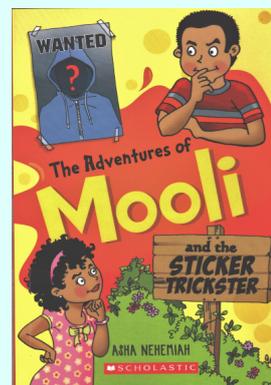
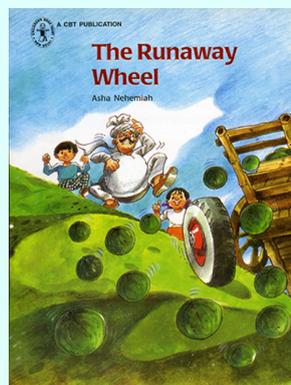
Books play an important role in a child's life allowing them to experience a world of possibilities. In this series we bring to you reflections of people behind children's literature.

Asha Nehemiah has worn various hats over the years, being a copywriter, teacher, trustee of a school, editor, freelance writer for ads and tourist guides, before acting on a whim and settling as an author of children's books. *“There are many rewards in writing children's fiction in terms of the creative challenges as well as the delight of interacting with my readers through school visits. I gradually gave up other forms and began writing exclusively for children.”*

Asha has written picture books, chapter books, short stories and mystery novels across age groups. Humour, mystery, fantasy, adventure and layers of serious issues like domestic violence and prejudices are strong elements in her fiction. Though she writes in English, many of her books have been translated into regional languages.

Having discovered the responsibilities in writing for children and how vital literacy is for a just society, Asha says, *“I now see myself as a collaborator in promoting a love of reading – my contribution being to provide exciting texts and unputdownable stories for readers of all ages.”* Some of her most loved laugh riots for children above six are The Mystery of the Secret Hair Oil Formula, The Adventures of Mooli, The Mystery of the Silk Umbrella and Zigzag and Other Stories.

For more information on Asha Nehemiah and to purchase her books visit www.ashanehemiah.com.



What's this Flower!

An Explorer's Guide to Local Flora

-Roopa Sundar



Children are innately curious about the environment around, plants being a big part of it. Unless adults take an interest in this natural world, we will be unable to share this richness and joy with children. To aid in this journey of awareness, we bring to you snippets of information about plants in our very own backyards.

CROWN FLOWER

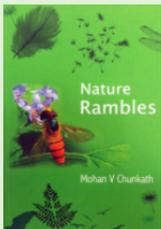


Another beautiful weed photographed in Besant Nagar; *Calotropis gigantea* called 'safed ak' in Hindi and 'erukku' in Tamil has beautiful white or lavender coloured flowers with a small elegant crown in the centre (hence its common name, the crown flower), which holds the stamens. The related *Calotropis procera* lacks this 'crown'. The mature fruit pod resembles a parrot's body and as a child I remember being told that it would become a parrot and fly away. What it actually did was to

dehisce and slowly allow its beautiful seeds, each with its own wispy white crown of hairs, to float away with us children chasing it.

In India, during Ganesh Chaturthi, a garland of *Calotropis* flowers is placed on the clay figurines of Ganesh. Farmers plough the whole plant into the paddy field as it is an excellent green manure.

An interesting insect associated with this plant is the 'Ak Grasshopper' or the Painted Grasshopper, *Poeciloceris pictus*. These short-horned grasshoppers belong to the family Acrididae. The adult grasshoppers show yellow and blue stripes on head and thorax, a bright red abdomen, green-yellow forewings and red hind wings which are seen only in flight. The adults grow to about 60 mm and are capable of good flight. The species exhibit swarming behaviour like the locusts.



***These excerpts are from 'Nature Rambles' by Mohan V Chunkath, a collection of about 200 species of local insects, flowers and birds, proving to be an invaluable resource for budding nature enthusiasts, be it elementary (6-12 years) children or adults who are just beginning their explorations of the natural world. Nature Rambles is available at www.nature-rambles.com.**

"If we observe the child, we will see that he is not against washing or combing. He is against the fact that someone humbles him as if he were an object, and does these things for him. When someone tries to do things for him, the child rebels. This is not only a wish to be active, but also what might call a deep sentiment of independence, of freedom, which is inborn in childhood; not to be touched by adults, to have the satisfying feeling of being able to carry out an action for himself"



(Montessori, Maria Creative Development in the Child Volume I Kalakshetra Publications, India 1994 Chapter 3, Page 14)



Q & A by AMI Trainers!

It is amazing to watch children transform and grow into young individuals forming their own unique personalities. We often wonder during these developmental years if we, as parents, teachers and caretakers of young children are making the right decisions and providing our children with the adequate support they need. In this segment, we have trained educationalists with tons of experience to answer the series of doubts and questions that arise in our minds and help us through this journey.



Ramya Sridhar is an AMI Trainer at Navadisha Montessori Foundation. An alumna of the first course of NMF, Ramya now holds AMI Montessori Diplomas at 3-6 and 6-12 levels. She takes an interest in the work of several NGOS that serve a range of socio economic, health and educational schemes.

Question:

How can we help children who are afraid of animals and insects? How can we help them to be kind to all living beings?

Answered by Ramya Sridhar :

Many times children pick up our reactions unconsciously. We pass on our reactions to children even when we do not intend to. So the first step in helping children starts with us. When we become aware of our fears or dislike, we can work on overcoming it. We can read or try to gain more information about the creature. An understanding of the insect or animal reduces our irrational fear for them. Becoming aware of our fear or dislike will also help us to consciously not react to the creature in front of children. Children are naturally kind beings. We can allow them to interact with animals around our homes without fear. We can set up a bird feed and help our children independently manage it. Even if we do not have the opportunity to grow plants in our homes, we can water the plants outside our compounds regularly. We can plant saplings around our building and care for them. When we give children opportunities for such interactions, we can see acts of spontaneous kindness from them.

*The Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) organised a series of webinars by AMI Trainers to help adults deal with the unique situation of supporting children in the home environment during the absence of school. Become a donor to access Ramya's article 'Nature and Urban Living' with other interesting questions raised during her webinar. Visit the donor's section in our website <https://montessori-india.org/>



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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, 7 issues: 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 tariff.

The Touch Board (colour; 6 x 8 cms)

1 issue	₹ 500
4 issues	₹1500
7 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 to reach us on or before the 5th of the previous month.

Donate generously to IMF!

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

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For more information, Contact : 8248010258 or email us at info@montessori-india.org

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