

THE TOUCH BOARD



MARCH 2021
VOLUME 12
ISSUE 7



IMF Events

IMF VOLUNTEERS MEET



Volunteers of Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) from different cities gathered to plan for the upcoming year on January 23, 2021.

AMI STUDENTS MEET

Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) students from various training centres across India came together for an orientation session on the work carried out by the Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) on February 11, 2021.

While Bhargavi PK from Chennai was happy to know the people working behind the scenes and driving the foundation, Kandadi Deepali from Hyderabad became aware of the many events being organised to spread awareness about the Montessori philosophy.

The students were left inspired to partner with the community in their endeavour to serve the child. *"It's totally a 'Work of Service'"* added Farzana Virani from Mumbai.

"It was wonderful to see students across all training centers. Knowing and understanding the work that IMF is undertaking, and being a part of it gives us a sense of belonging despite the current pandemic situation."



- Swathi Reddy, Bangalore



Heartiest Congratulations!!!



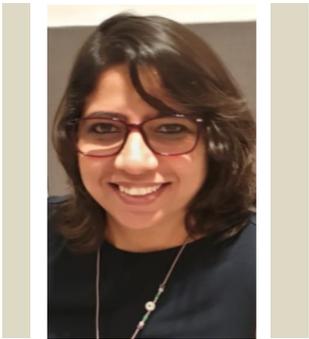
Pavithra Rajagopalan is now an AMI Primary (3-6) trainer! She feels fortunate to have had the experience of working on two courses simultaneously (Mumbai and Chandigarh) adding to her ability to engage with children and adults for the last 20 years in formal, non-formal and informal settings in India, the US and New Zealand.

Pavithra Rajagopalan



Vibhuti Jain, now an Auxiliary Assistants to Infancy (0-3) Trainer says that she is very excited about her accomplishment and at the same time feels great responsibility. She set up the first Infant Community in India where she worked for 8 years and has been associated with courses in Denver and China. She is passionate about working in the area of birth to three and strongly believes that this is the foundation for a better world.

Vibhuti Jain



Anahita Gandhi is delighted to be the newest member of the AMI Scientific Pedagogical Group (SPG). She has more than 12 years of experience being a Montessori educator. At the moment she is the Co-Director of Training at the Montessori Institute of Bangalore and part of the faculty in China. With this new role, she hopes to support the Montessori movement across the world.

Anahita Gandhi



Madhavi Gaddam

Madhavi Gaddam feels thrilled to be the first AMI Elementary (6 -12) trainer in India!! She has vast experience working with children and currently runs her school, Medha Montessori in Hyderabad. Over the years she has directed various talks, workshops and Assistants courses at the elementary level to spread awareness about the Montessori approach. *“I am very aware that this is just a starting point for more great work, and I am looking forward to it.”*

First AMI Primary Diploma Graduation at Chandigarh!

- Meera Ghelani



The first ever AMI Primary Diploma Satellite Course (Training centres offering courses at satellite locations) in India happened at Chandigarh through the Ratan Tata Institute, Mumbai under the guidance of Zarin Malva, Neelima Mhaskar and Pavithra Rajagopalan. The modular course started in December 2017 and concluded in January 2021 with 23 students who were all teachers of Vivek High School. They were grateful to receive the opportunity to train as Montessori Teachers from their homes and looked forward to their work with the children.

“Most of us have brought these changes into our homes. We are different spouses, parents/grandparents and employers now. We organize better, we guide better and we interfere less!”

- Students

Minna Mann expressed on behalf of all the students, *“We were making the child ‘follow us’ and it was during the course that we realized that it is us who should have been ‘following the child’ ”*. She added that learning coming naturally to the child was something they hadn’t really given a thought to, till then. *“And what a revelation that was!”*

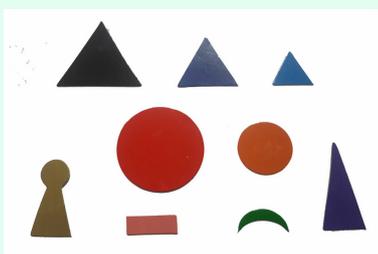
What's in the IMF Store ?

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.



Didactic Material for the Elementary (6-12 years)

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

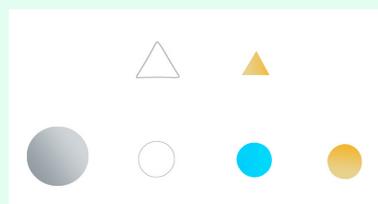


Set 1

Grammar Symbols Set 1 & Set 2

The elementary children study the various parts of speech represented by these symbols.

Set 1 - The pack contains 25 of each grammar symbol made of thick glossy card – article, noun, adjective, conjunction, preposition, verb, adverb, pronoun and interjection.



Set 2

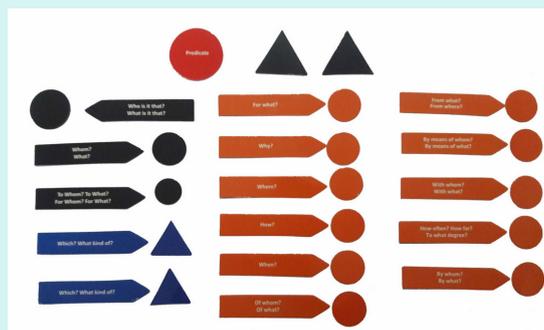
Set 2 - The pack contains 25 each of the additional symbols required to make the following – Proper Noun, Common Noun, Abstract Noun, Gerund, Infinitive, Participle, Past Participle, Intransitive Verb and Auxiliary Verb.

Price - Rs 450

Sentence Analysis Box 2 & Box 3

This material is used to study simple sentences in the Montessori Elementary environment. The arrows in Box 2 have a question on one side and the name of that part of the sentence on the other. In Box 3, the arrows have only the terms and no questions.

Price - Rs 200



Clause Analysis Box A & Box B

Children use the material to break down complex sentences into principal, dependent and independent clauses. Arrows in Box A have a question on one side and the name of the clause on the other. In Box B, the arrows have only the names of the clauses and no questions.

Price - Rs 200

”

“What happens in childhood is imprinted in the human soul. It is thus essential that the child be the centre of somebody’s affection; whatever the child does is considered with interest by that person. So parents need to take care to make the child the centre of their affection and to give him the love of which he has so much need.”

MONTESSORI, MARIA, CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHILD VOLUME II KALAKSHETRA PUBLICATIONS, INDIA 1994 CH 9 P 71

“

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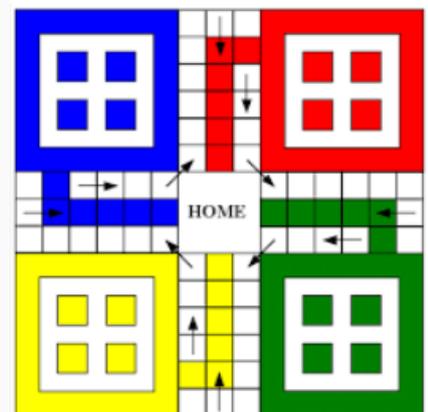
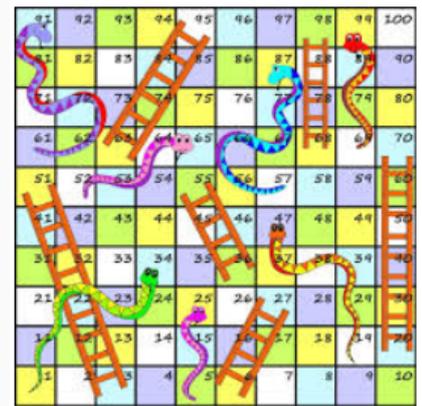
Numeracy & Games

- Kavneet Chadha

The Touch Board will soon bring to you a new series revolving around numeracy games for children and the benefits of playing them. In this era of technology where online games have become the 'go to' option for entertainment, we urge the families out there to bring back the charm of playing traditional games that build memories, allow for families to bond and have quality time as well as inculcate a fun way to learn mathematics for young children.

Children naturally come across the idea of numeracy in their day to day life when asked about their age, how many members are there in their family or to find out how many idlis are on the plate, etc. When children are playing 'Snakes and Ladders' the board has a number written on every space, from 1 to 100, which makes it ideal for learning to recognise and count numbers. The children also practise the sequence of numbers such as 15-16-17, as they need to know which direction to move on the board. In 'Ludo', children learn to read the dice, count the number of spaces to play and move to reach their goal, giving them an opportunity to understand manipulation of numbers.

Stay tuned for more exciting articles and new series in the upcoming year. This is our last issue for the year 2020 - 2021, we will resume again in July 2021. We thank all our contributors and donors for your support in keeping us connected with the community. Do check our IMF social media pages and websites for upcoming online events!



THE LOLLIPOP TREE

Lyrics by Joe Darion; Music by George Kleinsinger

One fine day in early spring I played a funny trick
Right in the yard behind our house I planted a lollipop stick
Then every day I watered it well and watched it carefully
I hoped one day that stick would grow to be a lollipop tree

Ha-ha-ha, Oh-ho-ho
What a place to be
Under a lollipop, lollipop, lollipop lolli-lolli-lollipop tree

Then one day I woke to find a very lovely sight
A tree all full of lollipops had grown in the dark of the night
I sat beneath that wonderful tree and looked up with a grin
And when I opened up my mouth a pop would drop right in

Ha-ha-ha, Oh-ho-ho
What a place to be
Under a lollipop, lollipop, lollipop lolli-lolli-lollipop tree

Winter came and days grew cold as winter days will do
On my tree my lovely tree not one little lollipop grew
From every branch an icicle hung, the twigs were bare as bones
But when I broke the icicles off they turned to ice cream cones

Ha-ha-ha, Oh-ho-ho
What a place to be
Under a lollipop, lollipop, lollipop lolli-lolli-lollipop tree

POETRY CORNER



Artwork by Sukanya Gnananandhan

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.

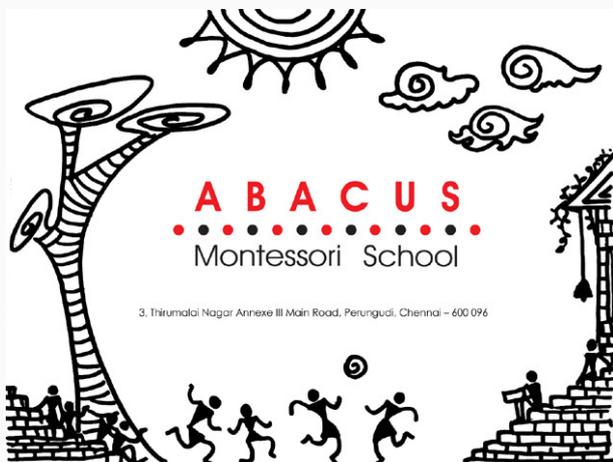
There are multiple ways in which plastic plagues our classrooms, sometimes evidently and sometimes not. We have to constantly audit our environment and find alternatives when something has to be replaced. Schools have shared some ways in which they minimise plastic on the shelf and from coming into the classroom.

- Alternatives to lamination of language material;
 - Printing on thick card stock or non-tearable paper
 - Printing on fabrics - even synthetic options last longer and are less wasteful
 - Handwriting on paper cards and having a stock of the same for replacement
- Printing/painting banners on cloth instead of flex
- Having policies to bring in individual birthday treats in paper bags or distributing without any packaging from a large box
- Repurposing cardboard boxes for storing materials



Are there more ways to reduce plastic waste? Share your thoughts with us at thetouchboard@gmail.com

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






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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...

Hero Worship in the Elementary Years

Our social life connects us with the people and community around us. It consists of interactions with others such as family, friends and members in our community. It consists of solving problems, creating ideas, objectives and rules that are agreed upon by members of the group. It is the same for our elementary children too. The characteristics they have in these years are equipped towards being social - be it their communication, movement, reasoning or their imagination.

Social life for younger children begins at home. As they reach elementary years (6-12), their social life extends beyond family. They begin to wonder about their role in the family, have questions about how a family functions and how society functions. They observe and learn from what the adults around them are doing and follow it. At times, they also query what the adults are doing in order to understand the reason behind it. They build their personality and value structure based on the adult's behaviour and attitude in their environment.

Dr. Montessori noted that among the many unique characteristics that draw them to be part of a group, elementary years are also a time for 'hero worship'. However this 'hero worship' is so strong in the elementary years that we must take it into account while considering their social life and social independence. Hero worship forms a big part in their social development and contributes to their social responsibility too. This 'hero' or 'role model' could be an athlete, singer, doctor, musician, mathematician or anyone who the children probably aspire to be. Hero worship happens when certain personality traits, talents or contributions made by their hero appeals to them.

The person our children consider their hero has a great bearing in building their personality, interests and sometimes self esteem too. Unfortunately, some of the celebrities that our children come across might not exactly be the 'hero' we would choose for them to aspire from. It is also impossible for us to choose a role model for our children. The 'hero' has to emerge from within them. However, as parents, we can influence the kind of people or probable role models that our children come across.



Stories are a significant way in which we can indirectly put forth their probable 'heroes'. Conversations with our children about their interests can give us a clue about what kind of stories or characters we can read for them. We can discuss with our children about courageous people who stood their ground for a cause, who made a difference in society by standing up for fairness and justice. These courageous people we discuss need not always be world leaders such as Gandhi or Martin Luther King, it could be someone within our own community who the children know or can talk to directly. Sometimes, they can also be unknown heroes who have contributed for the betterment of someone else's life, like a mason who built a beautiful bungalow or a farmer whose harvest enables us to eat. These role models could also stem from the work our children are doing. If they are interested in birds and are researching migratory birds, apart from referencing books, they could talk to an avid bird watcher or an ornithologist in the local community. This way we are giving social opportunities for our children and indirectly bring forward 'heroes' that they could choose from.

These experiences not only help our children with 'hero worship' but helps them build a bond with their peers, understand how society functions and perhaps contribute towards building their identity in the next stages of life.

Nurturing Independence - A Parent's Experience

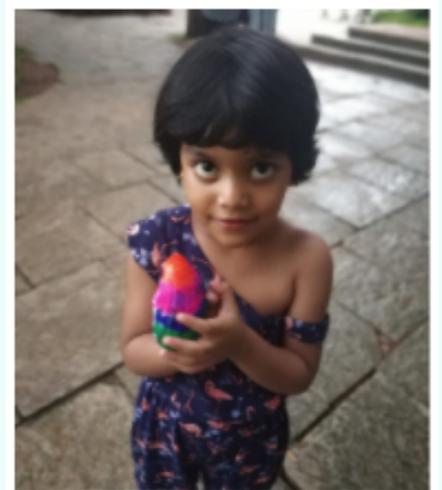
- Kavneet Chadha

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.

Indrakshi Dcosta has seen Iris, her daughter of 6 show a great amount of determination from a young age which has been further nurtured through her years in Montessori. The mother was relieved to see Iris not only blend into a traditional school when they moved to Oman, but do so with confidence sans inhibitions and persistence in whatever she took up. From planting a seed and waiting for it to grow to learning to skate and play the violin, Iris did it all with patience, grit and rigour.

Doing the Montessori training course herself when Iris was two years old helped Indrakshi put many theoretical aspects to practice. "The philosophy guided me to step back and allow her the freedom to make choices." Indrakshi had to constantly resist the temptation to help and often had to fight others to ensure that they wouldn't step in when Iris showed willingness and capability. Constant role modeling and also involving Iris with food preparation led the way to her becoming independent in eating. "So whether it was eating by herself or bathing or dressing and making her own choices for a daily snack, I had to constantly remove obstacles."

"The Montessori environment and her own personality has shaped and strengthened her and is what propels her forward to making her own decisions, having a very clear idea of what she wants."



Minds behind Books

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

- Roopa Sundar



Ruchi Shah

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.

Growing up in an art filled environment with parents as artists, choosing art as a profession came naturally to Ruchi K Shah. *"I love drawing and image making so creating illustrations for storybooks was something I always wanted to do."* Her journey as an illustrator began with Pratham Books and an idea to create cost effective coloured books and has continued on as a wall artist, muralist and workshop facilitator.

Ruchi's experiences of working in tribal village schools has influenced her understanding as a content creator and in breaking stereotypes in designing content. She doesn't restrict herself on any medium as she feels that children are quite open to any kind of style, genre and content. *"I use my storytelling skills and materials know-how to infuse a breath of life into written text and blank pages."* She brings alive the cow with a furious appetite in *Our Incredible Cow*, tracks wildlifer Sandesh Kaur through Waster Ghats in *The Cat in the Ghat* and creates different worlds that a book can take us through in *A Book is a Bee*.

"I'm inspired by the humdrum of daily life, its ingredients and textures that imitate the culture best and a bookshelf filled with books by Indian writers and illustrators."

Ruchi Shah's illustrated books are available on tulikabooks.com and store.prathambooks.org.

“
I use a storybook as a medium for layering visual styles and art techniques that are hidden or obvious and meant to be discovered and explored by children, teachers and parents.
”



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.

CANNONBALL FLOWER

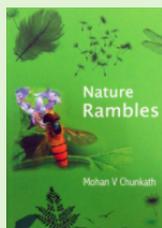


If it were not for the fact that the name 'boojum tree' has already been appropriated by *Fouquieria columnaris*, surely the 'Cannonball Tree' or *Couroupita guianensis* would have been eminently qualified to be called the 'boojum tree'.

There are a few magnificent specimens of this weird looking tree in the Theosophical Society Gardens, Adyar. It is a large (25 metres) deciduous tropical tree indigenous to the Amazon rainforest. The leaves, up to 15 cm long, are simple with slightly serrate margin.

The flowers are borne on long dangling branches which give the tree an unkempt appearance. The flowers are yellow, reddish and pink and are heavily scented. If you zoom in and examine the floral parts they bear an uncanny resemblance to a colourful sea anemone.

To complete the weird appearance, the tree bears, directly on the trunk and main branches, large round woody fruits; they look like big rusty cannonballs and give the tree its common name. The trees are grown in many Shiva temples in India and is called the 'Nagalingam' tree in Tamil.



***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.**

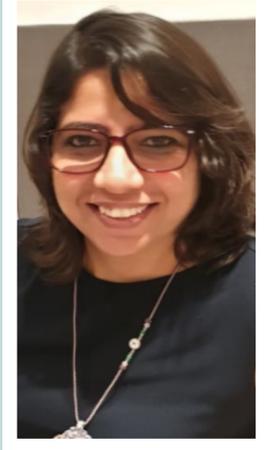
BLOCK YOUR DATE FOR THE UPCOMING IMF EVENT !



S.NO	DATE	TIME	ABOUT THE EVENT
1	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/register-for-events/</p>

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.



Anahita Gandhi is an AMI primary trainer. She received her AMI Montessori Diploma at the 3-6 level at the RTI Montessori Course, Mumbai in 2001. Anahita helped start and found the l'Ecole Montessori International in Mumbai. She completed her AMI Training of Trainers in 2016 and currently serves as the Co-Director of the AMI Primary Course the Montessori Institute of Bangalore and as a AMI faculty member in Hangzhou and Chongqing, China.

Question:

How do we understand that hand and eye coordination has started in the child?

Answered by Anahita Gandhi :

When the child is born, he is born only with reflexive movements, his movements are not under his control. But gradually as the will of the child begins to emerge and strengthen, we are able to observe the coming together of the mind and body in the movements that he creates. We can see this in the manner in which he interacts with the environment. The child from around the age of two and half becomes an active participant in the environment. He becomes aware of his environment. We are able to see this when we observe the child handling a piece of material. It is observed in the choices he makes, the duration of time spent on a piece of work, the level of interest the child shows, or the level of perseverance that the child has. These are some of the observable factors which indicate that the child has begun the process of coordinating his movements.

*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 Anahita's article 'Work of the Hand in Education' with other interesting questions raised during her webinar. Visit the donor's section in our website <https://montessori-india.org/>



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Do send in articles or news to thetouchboard@gmail.com

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, 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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Donor Benefits : Special access to Donor's section on the IMF website ; 40 issues of the newsletter; five Annual Journal; Special Donor pass to IMF events

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

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