

THE TOUCH BOARD



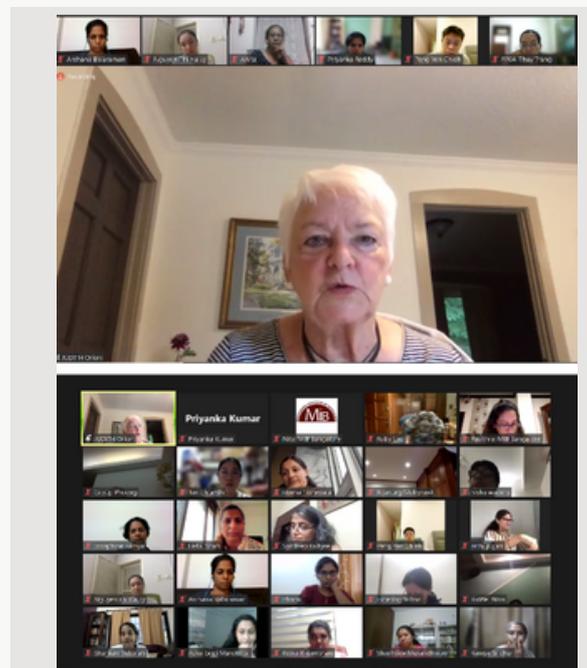
Photo Courtesy : Kinderhome Montessori School

Workshop - 'Parenting with Love and Knowledge'

- Kavneet Chadha

The Montessori Institute of Bangalore hosted a four day online workshop that commenced on July 13, 2022. It was facilitated by Judi Orion, AMI 0-6 Trainer, underpinning the work of the child under three years. The focus was on the development of language, movement, independence and limit setting. How parents and caregivers can support the crucial aspects of human development in a home environment was discussed. There was an overwhelming response for the workshop with 75 people coming together from India, Bulgaria, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand and Qatar.

For Bhanu, a Primary teacher from Bangalore, ideas about how children are born with different temperaments, certain aspects of which cannot be changed, was fascinating. This brought in the objective of complete acceptance of the child. "This workshop also gave me more clarity on what to expect from a child who transitions from the Toddler Community to the Primary environment."



AMI Primary Course Inauguration – Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai

- City Reporters



”

"Today in Mumbai I'm starting a new chapter of my life with a promise: Montessori is a way of life, and a wonderful one."

- Kathrin Simonsmeier from the 26th Primary course at Ratan Tata Institute (RTI)

Excited students were eager to begin their Montessori journey at Ratan Tata Institute, Mumbai

It was the time of the year for Primary (3-6 years) courses to begin at training institutes throughout the country as nearly 100 students from varied backgrounds and demographics came together to understand Montessori's work and child development. *"It was lovely to be introduced to many different people from different walks of life"*, commented Dimple BM, a student of the Montessori Institute of Bangalore (MIB).

Students shared how this unique approach to learning was a driving force for them all to realise the importance of sincere gratitude, responsibility of humans towards the environment, towards nature, towards people, respecting every type of work in and around, which are mostly taken for granted, and how this helps in the vital development of a child.

"Most of us who are from the traditional educational background, will now have to unlearn and relearn how to support the child in the best way possible with support of our trainers." - Students of the 22nd batch at Montessori Training and Research Trust (MTRT), Hyderabad.

Students lit lamps and planted saplings to mark the beginning of the 19th Primary Course at Navadisha Montessori Foundation (NMF), Chennai.



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Peek into the Insect World

Children are innately curious about the environment around them, insects 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 these fascinating creatures in our very own backyards.

- Jezreena Jezer

Carpenter Bee

Bees can be of two types. Bees that are social that build hives and bees that live solitary and form sisterhoods. Carpenter bees are of the second variety. Though they are considered to be solitary bees, they tend to be gregarious and often nest near each other. Some species have nests that are cohabited by mothers and daughters. They play a crucial role in pollination especially for plants like tomato, capsicum and brinjal.

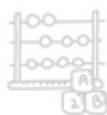


The carpenter bees are black and about 25-35mm in length. They can be mistaken for bumblebees, but they are generally larger and comparatively hairless. This is why their abdomen appears to be shiny and hard. They make their nests by tunnelling into wood, which they do by vibrating their bodies as they rasp their mandibles against the wood. They do not eat the wood. Instead, they discard the bits or re-use the wood particles to build partitions between cells. At approximately 1.5cm in diameter, they make a characteristic round entrance hole. Each nest has a single entrance which may have adjacent tunnels.

People are generally alarmed by the harmless carpenter bees because of their large size and loud buzz. They normally do not attack. So, the only likely way to get stung would be to crush a bee or unknowingly touch the entrance hole. Though a sting does cause swelling, a sting from a carpenter bee is a lot less painful than we would expect.



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Montessori – Misconception to Learning

- Vidhya Ramalingam

The term 'Montessori' has been used and understood in many and different ways. In this segment, parents share how their perception of Montessori and child development has changed and grown along with their child in a Montessori School.

Aishi Tolani mother of 5 year old Vien Tolani, says that Montessori was a very new concept for them as parents when they started looking for schools for their child. The basic idea they had about the program was that it was mostly activity based learning and focused more on life skills rather than book knowledge.

Aishi further adds that when they initially talked to people about getting their son into a Montessori Program, they were discouraged by many because of 'how strict they are about discipline'. They were told that the child will be unhappy due to the pressure of following rules and discipline. So as parents, they were in a dilemma about their choice of the teaching methodology. This changed once they witnessed their child flourish in the Montessori environment. *"Now we know and even try to educate new parents that the Montessori approach believes in letting the child take the lead and not vice versa. The transition of children and parents towards a disciplined, well organized routine is so smoothly done that it has become a way of life for us as a family. I have always seen my child happy and absolutely no signs of pressure"*.

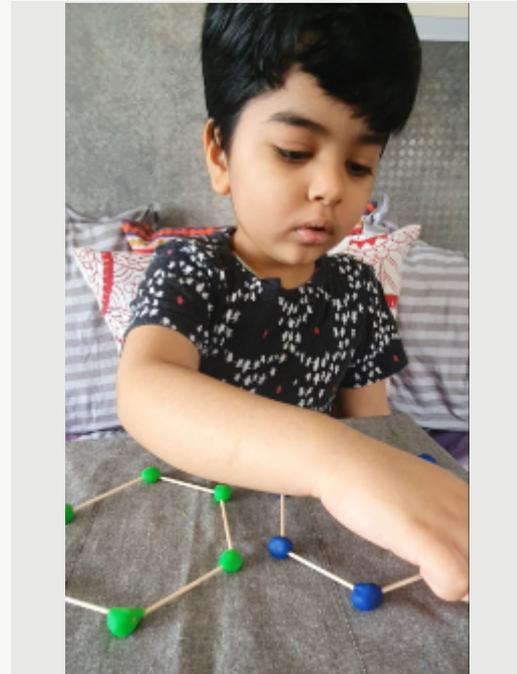
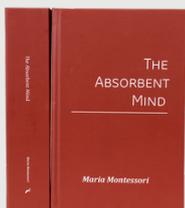


Photo Courtesy : Kinderhome Montessori School

Books in the IMF Corner

IMF has published several Montessori books to create awareness about the philosophy in the community and to support students training to lead Montessori classrooms. Montessorians share their favourite snippets from the IMF publication.



"The greatness of the human personality begins at the hour of birth. From this almost mystic affirmation there comes what may seem a strange conclusion. That education must start from birth."

Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, Chapter 1

“

"To me, this potential of a new born child reflects how sharp and observant he is. He takes -in everything from his environment, picks up the spoken language and movements of his family members effortlessly. Thus, we all say, he's a true reflection of his father or mother. Hence, I believe, if we offer a suitable environment to a new born child, we can bring out his true potential that can help him become independent, build a strong character and enable him to achieve great things in life. Surely, the birth of a child is no less than a wonder. The potential of a new born child is incredible. He takes -in everything from his environment, be it the spoken language or movements of his family members effortlessly to develop independence."

Shailja Kapoor, AMI Primary Course Student, Chennai

To get your copy of Foundations of Montessori Pedagogy, visit www.montessori-india.org/store/

Beginnings of Life - The First Year

Vibhuti Jain, the first Indian AMI Assistants to Infancy (0-3 years) Trainer lays focus on the child in the very first year of life and how adults can prepare both themselves and create a loving space to welcome and nurture the spirit of new life.



Around 5-6 months, when the child is taken to the communal dining place, the baby opens their mouth and turns his gaze towards the food which is being offered to others. This is a strong expression of readiness for interest in solid foods. The child also needs nutrients from solid meals. When this gradual transition from milk foods to solid meals is supported by the caregiver, we see children accepting the food of their culture joyfully and spontaneously. This is a significant turning point in the child's life where they develop a healthy relationship with food which hopefully lasts a lifetime.

Photo Courtesy : Sampoorna Vembunathan

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Offerings to a Montessori Environment

Parents are always looking to make meaningful contributions to the Montessori community during special occasions. In this series, Montessori teachers share ideas for gifting to a Montessori environment - Toddler, Primary & Elementary.

- Roopa Sundar & Vidhya Ramalingam

Any image of a Montessori classroom depicts open shelves with sets of materials accessible to children. In the Primary and Toddler spaces, these sets of activities are put together on trays that the children can carry to their place of work while in the elementary, the children use trays to collect things that they need for work.

Garnering a collection of beautiful trays is something Montessori adults like Saritha Rani Sandila are always on the lookout for. "There is always a need for trays for replacing in case of wear out or accidents and also for rotation to add variety and newness to the environment." Beautiful trays and baskets of different sizes and shapes and also different materials like metal, cane, wood add to the beauty and functionality of Montessori classrooms.



Photo Courtesy : Navadisha Montessori School

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Demystifying Montessori Materials

Many times, the child's reply to 'What did you do in class today?' mystifies the adult even more. Either incomprehensible names or mundane activities are encountered. This series brings to light how and why some materials are set up and how they are used by the children in a Primary Montessori community (3-6 years).

- Archana Narayanan & Khyati Shah

Mopping

Mopping - a daily chore to adults is an activity that is enjoyed by children in a Montessori environment. For the children, the purpose of mopping is more than just to clean a space. Like all practical life activities, there are a number of steps to follow which have to be executed in a particular sequence - fill water in a bucket, dip the mop, wring out the water, mop the floor, repeat for as long as they would like to, dry the cloth, empty the bucket, wipe down the bucket and then place it back on the shelf for another to use. So it works on logical sequencing and memory.

It also involves several different movements of the wrist, arms and feet. By repeating them, their movements get refined over time - preparing them for other activities.

Through practice, they acquire the skill and can independently handle situations with possibilities of spills. This in turn builds their confidence!

The children also experience the satisfaction of a job done by them in their own environments. Caring for their own spaces builds a feeling of belonging.

For the young child - often the activity is not done with the end goal of a clean space but simply to satisfy their need for movement.

For the older child - mopping is a way to care for their spaces, help out a friend or just wind down after a long day.



Photo Courtesy : Navadisha Montessori School



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Sports in Montessori - Elementary

Having worked with young children and certified in the Montessori Sports Fundamentals, Josephine Ramya, a sports enthusiast and Montessori Guide, shares ideas to inspire movement and games in the Montessori environments.



The second plane child is physically robust and has a lot of energy to expend. The body is now proportionate and they can experiment with a whole range of movements in this phase. We can open doors to many forms of movement in this stage and these children need little or no warm up to get started. They can be introduced to different types of sports and games, individual and team games, racquet sports, athletics, and so on. They like to test their skill and endurance and they need to be offered opportunities to do the same. We might come across children who might not want to play a sport. We have to give them the time to observe and help them by offering choices of things to do, where they will feel successful.

Indoors

Books or reference material to explore the world of sports/dance/other movement activities.

Outdoors

Based on the infrastructure/space available you need to offer sporting activities to these children. Ideally a playground with opportunities to experience multiple sporting activities based on their choice should be available. These days, due to the lack of infrastructure and space, a lot of activities have assumed different forms, like for example 3x3 basketball where you only need half a basketball court, mini football, and so on.

Game based drills before playing are useful as a warm up routine, and it's important that children understand the complete cycle of a warm up routine, playing the game and cooling down to wind up the activity. This is an important cycle of activity to develop an understanding of the need to take care of our bodies and to avoid injuries at a later stage. Each sport has its own set of drills, some can be replicated for multiple sporting activities.

A subject matter expert, who understands child development and who serves as a link between the child and the sports environment will be an ideal choice to encourage and create a love for sport. Guidance by offering to explain the rules of the game, demonstrating movements by being a part of the game, offering opportunities to learn from mistakes and so on, help the child immensely, not only for physical development but also psychological development. Children need guidance and precise instructions. Having demo sessions with experts in the particular sport/game builds curiosity and interest.



Watching games or visiting sporting arenas also ignite the passion for sport. Friendly matches with other local school teams or clubs helps these children to assess their skills without being under stress of participating in a competition/winning. After school programmes for these children help in expending the excess energy.

This plane of development sets up the stage for the next plane where children choose to pursue a particular sport/game. They then proceed to specialize in the chosen sport/game and look to improve their skills by taking up specialized coaching.

Photo Courtesy : Navadisha Montessori School

AMI Talk - 'Digging Deep: Connecting to Nature for a Healthy Society'

- Dipa Sreekumar



Association Montessori Internationale organised an online talk on the occasion of Montessori's birth anniversary on August 31, 2022. The two keynote speakers, Nicolina Montesano and Yoliswa Mahobe were deeply passionate about the work they do and they brought our awareness to how we can make contributions to sustainable living by working with nature. They inspired all of us to take up small responsibilities which will lead to making huge differences in protecting the environment.

We were all happy to hear the great granddaughter of Maria Montessori, Nicolina Montesano who is a researcher with a background in discourse analysis. Through a powerpoint she helped us understand how important it is to protect nature and various ways to do so. She highlighted the importance of Permaculture, Anthropocene and Ecoliteracy.

Yoliswa Mahobe is the training coordinator for the 'Living Soils Community Learning Farm' at the Sustainability Institute, Stellenbosch, South Africa. She too through videos and photographs showed us the work that students do on the farm. They have hands-on experience on growing seasonal food at the farm and then consuming the same. The simplicity of the farm and way of life is humbling, and its impact is profound. It requires immense passion, determination and discipline to run an organisation of such stature.

Lynne Lawrence, Executive Director of AMI coordinated the whole programme. In the beginning she set up the stage for the speakers and at the end she summarised the whole talk in a way that inspired us all. Lynn shared a quote (unpublished) of Maria Montessori which they found in an old notebook at Maria Montessori's house.

"Cosmic education sees nature in an ecological way – everything is of service to something else. Each animal, each plant, each inanimate object has its own plan in creation. The importance of one cannot be valued over another because each (even the most insignificant) is indispensable to the whole. Nothing—including the human species—exists only for its own benefit. 'Equilibrium' in the forces of nature must always be maintained. The danger of our present imbalance in nature will be catastrophic unless we consciously change the course of events".

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Adolescents at Work



Care of plants in the Farm , Quinta Essentia - Adolescent Centre for Study and Work

Over the past few years, the 'Erdkinder' program has been gaining momentum, establishing strong roots for the AMI Adolescent Training (12 - 18 years) to take-off here in India. In this series, we bring to you glimpses of the adolescent community engaged in purposeful work across various prepared environments.

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Frequently Asked Questions Answered by AMI Trainers!

We often wonder during the developmental years if we, as caretakers of young children, are making the right decisions and providing our children with the support they need. In this segment, we have trained educationalists answer a series of queries and help us in this journey.



Kavya Chandrasekhar is a Parent and a Montessori Educator with training from 0-12 years. She is currently pursuing the AMI 12-18 course and is an AMI Assistants to Infancy (0-3) Trainer-in-Training. Kavya is the Founder of The Montessori School (0-6 years) and Kriyasthala (6-12 years) which offers Montessori Education from birth to 12 years. She is invested in bringing AMI training to the city to ensure Montessori Education reaches a wider community.

Question:

How can we support toilet learning for the child at home?

Answered by Kavya Chandrasekhar :

Toilet learning is a gradual process and begins at birth. Changing the child as soon as the child is wet, indicates to the child that the normal state is to be dry.

When the child is able to sit up, he can be taken to the toilet at regular intervals with no expectation around elimination. Gradually as the child begins to pull up, cruise and walk, the child can be invited to use the toilet. Use of toilet at regular intervals and involving the child in the process paves the way for toilet learning.

Cloth diapers, potty seat and a prepared toilet space for the young child aids toilet learning. A human environment that is understanding of the process is crucial to toilet learning.



Photo Courtesy : Amritha Sengottuvel

AMI MEMBERSHIP

Membership of AMI is open to all individuals. AMI members are a stronghold in the Montessori community, putting Montessori education in the spotlight and making a difference to the lives of children. AMI membership brings with it: educational publications such as the AMI Journal, digital newsletters keeping you up to date with the latest on AMI's work and news from across the globe, and discounted offers at congresses, refreshers and other events.

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Saturday	27-Aug-22	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk	Relevance of Montessori Today	Virginia Viscovic
Saturday	22-Oct-22	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk	Supporting the Intellect in the Second Plane	Carol Hicks
Saturday	19-Nov-22	9 AM - 12 PM	AMI Students Workshop	Stories in Human Life	Gowri Ramnarayan
Saturday	26-Nov-22	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk	Living peacefully with Children	Irene Fafalios
Saturday	28-Jan-23	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk	Supporting the Development of Movement in the First Plane	Connie Black
Saturday	25-Feb-23	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk	Preparing the Child's Environment	Janet McDonnell

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 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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