

THE TOUCH BOARD

Indian
montessori
foundation



FEBRUARY 2023

VOLUME 14

ISSUE 7



Photo Courtesy : Redwood Montessori School

Workshop - 'Writing Progress Reports: Communicating Effectively with Parents'

- Meera Ghelani, Chennai

The three day online workshop from December 14-16 offered by Navadisha Montessori Foundation (NMF) was an eye opener for more than 200 teachers. AMI Primary Trainers Rukmini Ramachandran, Ruby Lau, Hema Rangarajan and Ramya Sridhar took the participants through sample reports and the importance of keen observation and keeping meticulous records. The workshop also highlighted how vital parent communication is for this work. Communicating with conviction and empathy, educating parents by holding various parent meetings, reading Montessori articles with parents, laying out materials etc., were all proposed to complement this work.

Karuna Lulla appreciated the record keeping templates and reinforcement of the idea that the child engages with the material only when it is offered at the right time with the appropriate challenge. This encouraged many to go back to course guidelines and relook at the recommended ages for various activities.

“The idea of providing a cumulative report running from 2.5 years to 12 years of age gives a new perspective to Progress Reports. It is like viewing a child's timeline, capturing the developmental milestones”,

shares Sukanya Gnananandhan, Primary Educator

Workshop - 'Working with Clay in the Montessori Environment'

- Roopa Sundar, Chennai

Navadisha Montessori Foundation (NMF) offered a one of its kind workshop of setting up clay work along with art in the Montessori environment, discussing both the philosophy and practicalities that goes with it. While the training team took the participants through various art stages that can be offered and preparing the environment and experiences to inspire this work, Josephine Ramya and Anju Asokan demonstrated techniques to work with clay and guided the participants as they got their hands dirty in work stations that were set up to practice with their own bag of clay.

AMI student Ambili Raj was always uncomfortable with messy things but the workshop changed her perspective. "Working with clay definitely brought out the child in all of us", quipped Sasi Devi, who works in the Primary classroom. And as the trainers mentioned, the work took everyone back to the roots of how our ancestors lived, very much in touch with Earth.



A kind of quiet set upon the 25 participants as they pinched, coiled and kneaded the clay, molding it as their minds wanted to.

The demonstration ended with a poem that resonated with everyone. A perfect close to a clayful morning!

Mud
John Smith

I like mud.
I like it on my clothes.
I like it on my fingers,
I like it on my toes.
Dirt's pretty ordinary
And dust's a dud.
For a really good mess-up
I like mud.

Workshop - 'Hindi'

- Shweta Agarwal, Hyderabad



Montessori Training and Research Institute offered a two-day workshop on January 7 and 8 in which 65 participants were hosted by Lumbini Montessori House of Children. Shashikala Agarwal, a senior Montessorian deeply connected with the history of Montessori in Hyderabad led the workshop.

The participants were guided through oral activities that can be done in Hindi which was later extended into the possibilities with written work. The host school also prepared some Montessori Primary Hindi materials in accordance with Shashikala Agarwal's instructions that are available as a set for schools and individuals to order.

"The session was quite intense with a lot of information, intricate details about basics, grammar and new terminologies in pure Hindi. We definitely learnt effective ways of presenting the language."

Aarti Ganesh, Primary Educator



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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

Painted Grasshopper

The Painted Grasshopper (*Poekilocerus pictus*) is large and brightly coloured. It is also sometimes called the rainbow grasshopper. These names try to describe the beauty of this grasshopper. The adults grow to about 60mm and can change their outward appearance by molting. They can fly well and exhibit swarming behaviour like the locusts.

The painted grasshopper associates with the plant known as giant milkweed or crown flower (*Calotropis Gigantea*), a poisonous plant. This serves as its sole host plant. If milkweed plants are destroyed from an area, the painted grasshopper will also vanish.



The nymph has red dots on its back. When it is disturbed, it ejects liquid in a sharp and sudden jet from one of the. The foul smell stays for a long time. The young eat the milkweed and choose not to digest the poison. Instead, they store the poison from the plant which harms the predator that tries to consume it. The adult grasshoppers are highly poisonous. The bright colour of the grasshopper warns the predators that it is extremely poisonous.

The adult digs the soil and lays the eggs underneath. The eggs lay dormant there sometimes for half a year or more till proper conditions set in. They are awakened when the rains start. They mostly emerge just after summer.



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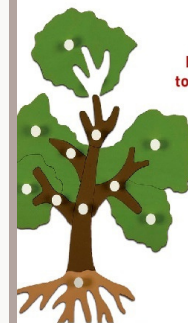
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Books in the IMF Corner

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.



“It is hoped that when this sentiment of love for all subjects can be aroused in children, people in general will become more human, and brutal ways will come to an end.”

- Montessori Maria, *To Educate the Human Potential*, Chapter 3, Page 29

”

Montessori believed that there is a cosmic purpose to all things in the world, whether living or non living. Humans have a deeper role to play as they can consciously arrive at a bigger purpose. And the purpose is the coming together of humanity to make this world a better place for everything - to support and balance everything.

So the education for life that we offer to a child would mean an awareness, gratitude and humility towards all those lives that have lived before us. How they have contributed through their work and from here to take it forward. The quote is very deep for me to understand it myself and an even bigger task is to transfer it to education.

Vinu Pallisery, Elementary Educator, Bangalore

To get your copy of *To Educate the Human Potential*, visit www.montessori-india.org/store/

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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.



Photo Courtesy : (Left) Amritha Sengottuvel; (Right) Karuna Garuda

Babies have a gastrocolic reflex that causes them to have a bowel movement immediately and also while eating. Maximum usage of cloth diapers/underpants allows the child to feel the internal sensation of passing urine or feces as well as the external sensation of a wet or dirty diaper. This sensation is taken away by the overuse of disposable diapers which causes significant delay in toileting awareness. We offer a potty chair so the child can sit and then an adult commode with a ring insert and a step stool to reach up to the commode to help them to urinate and defecate. We take care that their feet stay on the floor on a platform to ease the passing of urine or feces. We follow the pace of the child, never forcing them. This process helps the child naturally gain toileting independence.

One test of the correctness of educational procedure is the happiness of the child

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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

Reading Folders

To read English we must recognise many patterns. We see that different combinations of 2 or 3 letters can come together to make different sounds. The reading folders help the children to systematically explore and recognise these patterns. In each folder, there are cards representing the various ways in which the key sound can be written. For example – the sound “f” can be written as f, ph, gh. 14 such key sounds are offered accompanied by little booklets with words containing the combinations.

This activity, like others in the Montessori environment, lends itself to several extensions. Based on their exploration, children are able to categorise and sort the sounds. The children play dictation games with each other and work at remembering spelling patterns. As we provide more opportunities for the children to read books, their awareness of spelling grows. Learning to spell words correctly is a journey for children. As the children begin to use the reading folders the children slowly memorise many of the combinations without much effort. Even though we may see the occasional misspelling in their writing, we can see that they are aware of spelling and interested in checking their work on their own.



Photo Courtesy: Ubuntu Montessori School



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The Child, The Explorer



In this segment, Rajini Nitin Talreja brings to the forefront the workings of the mind of young children and how we can best support their exploration of the world.

Rajini stumbled upon Montessori when she shifted gears from the Tech industry. She is an AMI Primary Diploma holder and has immense experience assisting and guiding young children. She currently works as an Academic Coordinator for the Children's House Community and supports the adults in keeping the space enriching for the children.

Helping Children eat at Home

Helping children eat at home is a purposeful and essential skill for young children. Most often, parents feed their children to avoid the mess or limited time around them. Children under the age of six, experience the world sensorially. Hence, it is very important for children to eat their food themselves, savor the textures, smells and taste of the food. Children start to understand, identify and enjoy food when they eat it themselves.

Few things to keep in mind when helping children eat at home :

- To ensure comfortable seating for your child while eating
- To ensure they are part of preparation (arrangement of table, plates, food preparation)
- To ensure all the utensils (like plate, glass and spoons) for the child are of appropriate size (Child size)
- To ensure they see the entire cycle of preparation, consuming and cleaning
- To ensure precise vocabulary (is given throughout the conversation with the child)
- To practice grace and courtesy within the family (thank you, could you please give me, etc)



Photo Courtesy: Karuna Garuda



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AMI President's Message

Alain Tschudin was appointed President of Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) in April 2022. His new year message for the Montessori community was heartfelt and resonated with many people around the world. *“On behalf of our Board, I would like to extend our very best wishes for a bright and blessed 2023 to our AMI members, to the entire Montessori community and to all the individuals and organisations with whom we are privileged to interact. May we be inspired to live a life of light and love that radiates peace and justice, as we invite young people to be the kings and queens of our hearts and our homes!”*

Read Alain’s entire message on:

<https://montessori-ami.org/news/2023-ami-presidents-message>



Alain Tschudin is Professor of Peace Studies and Director of the International Centre of Nonviolence at the Durban University of Technology, South Africa. Prior to this he served as lead consultant to the United Nations Special Adviser on Africa on the nexus and fast-tracking the SDGs and has extensive humanitarian experience, having worked with UNICEF and Save the Children in child protection in Africa and the Middle-East. He is a registered psychologist and holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Natal and a Ph.D. in moral philosophy and theology from the University of Cambridge.

Adolescents at Work



Baking muffins for Christmas as a part of production and exchange in the Adolescent Community, Pragna Montessori School

Over the past few years, there has been great interest in the ‘Erdkinder’ program which has gained momentum, and has begun to gradually take root for the AMI Adolescent Training (12 - 18 years) to take-off here in India. In this series, we bring you glimpses of the adolescent community engaged in purposeful work in various prepared environments.

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 & Aditi Ganesh

A wide range of boxes and organisers is something always in store in a Montessori classroom. A small change, be it a box in which some reading slips are placed or a new addition to the opening containers activity can cause a stir of activity and renewed interest in the environment. Aishwarya Janarthanan, who has worked with children in Primary and Elementary shared how a beautiful set of wooden boxes with small drawers and carving that she received came in handy to display language material.

Boxes can be of different sizes, with compartments, of different materials and interestingly with different ways to open/unlock them. It is a collection that is usually garnered over years, with many contributions from the immediate community and hence makes a lovely offering to a classroom.



Photo Courtesy : The Montessori House

Grasshopper Green

Anonymous

Poetry Corner

Grasshopper Green is a comical chap:
He lives on the best of fare.
Bright little trousers, jacket and cap,
These are his summer wear.
Out in the meadow he loves to go,
Playing away in the sun;
It's hopperty, skipperty, high and low,
Summer's the time for fun.

Grasshopper Green has a quaint little house;
It's under the hedge so gay.
Grandmother Spider, as still as a mouse,
Watches him over the way.
Gladly he's calling the children, I know,
Out in the beautiful sun;
It's hopperty, skipperty, high and low,
Summer's the time for fun.

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In Fond Memory of Meenakshi Sivaramakrishnan



Meenakshi Sivaramakrishnan was an Indian educator, who promoted the Montessori method of education in India for the past four decades. She passed away on January 22, 2023.

Ms. Sivaramkrishnan started her Montessori journey in 1966 as an AMI Primary Educator in Chennai. After receiving her AMI Trainers Certificate in 1988, she trained many aspiring Montessori educators in India and abroad. Her desire to spread Montessori inspired her to translate several books of Dr. Montessori in various local languages in India.

Kavya Chandrashekar, founder of The Montessori School and AMI Trainer in Training (0-3), says, “Ms. Sivaramakrishnan fondly called Meenakshiji voiced out for the rights of the child with great clarity and authority. I distinctly remember the impact she had on me as a student. She was a beacon for Montessori education in India and her role was paramount in the propagation of Montessori Education in India. I hope and wish that we Montessorians can come together through our work, to carry forward the legacy of her work.”

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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.



Hemalatha Rangarajan, an AMI 3-6 trainer, is the Co-Director of Training at Navadisha Montessori Foundation, Chennai. She has more than a decade of experience of working with children and has been involved in mentoring schools.

Question:

When the children experience everything a couple of times they become bored and they drop those things. How can we make a child enjoy a repetitive process? Do they not get tired when the process is predictable?

Answered by Hemalatha Rangarajan :

We can assure you children are never bored with repetition. On the contrary! Children below the age of six naturally love to repeat over and over again. This cannot be forced. Observe carefully when a child chooses an activity spontaneously. The difficulty comes when the adult chooses the activity and wants the child to be interested and repeat it as many times as the adult wants. We see repetition only if the activity meets the child's capability and offers sufficient challenge.

Become a donor to access Hemalatha's article 'Optimising the Child's Experiences' with other interesting questions. Visit the donor's section in our website <https://montessori-india.org/>

“

“The adult is the result of a child. Every adult is the achievement of a grown-up child; the causes of good or of evil in the adult must all be sought in the very short period of the child's growth.”

(Montessori, Maria ; From Childhood to Adolescence, Kalakshetra Publications, India 1973, Pg.140)

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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IMF EVENTS

2022-23



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Saturday	27-Aug-22	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk	Relevance of Montessori Today	Virginia Viseovic
Saturday	22-Oct-22	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk (Online)	Supporting the intellect in the Second Plane	Carol Hicks
Thursday	27-Oct-22	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk Patasala Montessori School, Chennai	Raising Joyful Readers	Rukmini Ramachandran
Saturday	19-Nov-22	9 AM - 12 PM	AMI Students Workshop (Online)	Stories in Human Life	Gowri Ramnarayan
Saturday	19-Nov-22	9 AM - 12 PM	Workshop RTI Centre, Mumbai	Setting limits for all planes of development	Beena Parekh
Thursday	24-Nov-22	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk Prakruthi Montessori School, Hyderabad	Helping young children live in harmony with nature	Deepa Sreekumar
Thursday	24-Nov-22	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk Nivriti, Bangalore	Support Staff listening to children	Shatini Titak
Saturday	26-Nov-22	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk (Online)	Living peacefully with Children	Irene Fafaios
Thursday	19-Jan-23	5 PM - 6 PM	Talk Savi Montessori School, Mumbai	Reading your child's milestones	Geeta Savla
Saturday	28-Jan-23	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk (Online)	Supporting the Development of Movement in the First Plane	Connie Black
Saturday	25-Feb-23	4 PM - 5 PM	Talk (Online)	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 ms)

1 issue	₹ 500
4 issues	₹1500
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Montessori Matters (black and white; [full page] 20 x 12cms)

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