

Working Hands, Building Minds

Child putting together pieces of a map



'Concentration' is not a term generally associated with young children. In this photo series, we bring you a glimpse of the Primary environment (3-6 years) with children focused for extended periods of time in work that is challenging, developmentally appropriate and of their choice.

City Events

Commencement of AMI Elementary Montessori Diploma Course

Kavneet Chadha I Bangalore

Montessori Institute of Bangalore (MIB) commenced their first AMI Elementary Diploma Course on January 10, 2024. After attending the Orientation and Adjunct Elementary courses, Khushi Talreja was excited to take on this journey and meet her fellow batchmates.

The course intends to prepare adults to understand and to support optimal development for children aged 6-12 through deep engagement with Montessori developmental theory and through purposeful exploration of developmentally appropriate educational activities and materials.



The course with 43 participants from India around the world, including Philippines, Bali, Nigeria and Algeria will be conducted in a blended format and facilitated by AMI Trainer Alison Awes.

Workshop - 'Introduction to Montessori'

Meera Ghelani I Mumbai

Neelima Mhaskar, AMI Primary Trainer, conducted a workshop for the domestic support staff of DaVinci and Harmony Montessori schools. It was held at Harmony Montessori on December 22 and 23 and was attended by 35 'didis'. Saroj Ben and Lata shared how they got to learn many things like how to talk to the child and behave when around them. "Many ideas for us to think about and incorporate in class."



Neelima Mhaskar spoke in Hindi about the development of the child and Montessori principles in simple terms which was well received by the audience (support staff).

AMI Primary Orientation Course

Tholakari Chinukulu School I Telengana



The facilities were minimal but the enthusiasm and dedication to conduct and complete the course facing all odds by the Tholakari Chinukulu Montessori House of Children's management and staff was abundant

AMI approved the first Telugu Orientation Course at Wanaparthy District a rural part of Telangana with zero course fee. The course was conducted by Madhavi Latha, AMI Primary Associate Trainer from December 18 to 31, 2023. The inauguration with a big batch of 72 students was graced by local activists and anganwadi officials.

The people of Wanaparthy showed interest in having many more AMI courses to empower their teachers and transform the roots of the education system prevailing in their local schools. The news slowly reached many officials and at the closing ceremony more government officials paid a visit and were moved to see the collective effort. They assured that they will do the needful for the Montessori Movement. The whereabouts of the course was covered in the local newspapers as well.

A government teacher shared how she realised that the Montessori education focuses on nurturing overall development in the child. "It is not only about academic achievements but the child must be helped to become a good contributing member of the society." She further added that she learnt how important it is to sow the seeds of art, music, sports etc in the child in his formative years.

AMI Elementary Orientation Course

MMTI I Hyderabad

Medha Montessori Training Institute (MMTI) conducted an AMI Elementary Orientation Certificate Course that was led by AMI Auxiliary Trainer Kamini Kapur. The course, which was spread over three weeks, was an immersive experience for the students in spite of being online. Each of the three-hour long sessions contained theory lecture, group discussion and practical presentations including cosmic stories, art, music and dance. Observation, being the foundation of the whole approach, was weaved into the session before the students went to observe children in the schools.

The participants experienced the course as their beginning of a journey of passion and cosmic understanding. "The cosmic education and work of hands and the whole curriculum of 6-12 years is mind boggling and I see that a real change for the better can be brought in the world through children getting this kind of education", shares Shobha Goyal Gupta. To Laila Bawany, this education not merely imparted knowledge but nurtured a child's understanding of their place in the universe, fostering a sense of unity and encouraging them to see the world as a harmonious whole.

Their observations in a Montessori school were affirmative of the positive impact of the approach, purposeful activities, independent learning, and collaborative interactions which instilled a collective commitment to Montessori philosophy.



"As a biologist, I heard most of the time about independent nature but here interdependencies make much more sense in order to maintain harmony between nature and living beings." - Shobha Ediga

Hearty Congratulations!

Helen Mohan Elias is now an AMI Primary Auxiliary Trainer!

Her Montessori journey began in 1999 with the Primary (3-6 years) Diploma program. She then assisted Lakshmi Krishnakumar, AMI Director of Training at Montessori Training Research Trust (MTRT) for several years, along with school experience at Taraporewalla Montessori House of Children. EsF work and Community Rooted Education motivated her in the path to becoming a trainer. Working on the Blended Program sustained her interest and supported her to continue the journey and reach the Auxiliary status. Helen is committed to Montessori's vision of equity and justice for all children.



Indian Montessori Foundation Conference -Prakrti: Observing Harmony, Nurturing Potential

The Sixth National Conference brought together hundreds of people from across the country at the Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS) Bangalore on January 19 and 20. Being the first conference post pandemic, one could feel the enthusiastic greetings and buzz of conversation, all centered around 'The Child'. The demographics of the gathering included a wide range of individuals engaging with children in various capacities like trainers, parents, students, school founders, teachers, all hoping for an immersive experience in nature.



IIHS, built to be the biggest urban ecological research site, posed a perfect venue for the gathering as it was flanked on either side by a forest and lake and rich in biodiversity. The inaugural address by Anuradha Shankar, AMI Board Member brought to focus the establishment of harmonious communities and nature being foundational in education. This was followed by AMI Elementary Trainer Baiba Krumins Grazzini taking the audience through the evolution of the Montessori programme which started in Italy. "Montessori's approach to education came to be through experimentation, observation, and reflective practises that she developed by studying and working with children and this was beautifully captured by Baiba", shares Sumana B, a Montessori Guide from Mysore

Chandini Chhabra, Founder of Liona Forest Farm, shared her personal experiences of living with her family on a farm and how incorporating nature using fundamental resources can be extended to the classrooms. "The captivating presentation and wealth of knowledge made me feel for the first time that nature and humanity can coexist", says Kaizin Irani, a Guide from Hyderabad. The participants recognised the importance of outdoor lessons on par with indoor ones, and how being in nature allows children to learn, observe, and cultivate a sense of care for the fauna and flora.

While AMI Primary Associate Trainer Tania Stewart focused on Biophilia, a term coined to symbolise the natural love for nature through various research findings, AMI Adolescent Trainer Tina Booth emphasized on the social, psychological, intellectual, emotional and physical changes that mark the transition to adolescents. She suggested living in nature, with opportunities for solitude and contemplation to support identity formation and working on the land that contributes to understanding & enabling economic independence.



Zai Whitaker, Educator and Writer shared personal anecdotes and how nature has always been at the heart of Montessori teachings. She urged Montessorians to find opportunities for the child to 'Wander, Wonder and Ponder'. For Swecha Dharmapuri, the biggest take away was making coming generations appreciate and see the importance of every element of nature.

Jagdish Krishnaswamy and Neha Sami, Dean and Associate dean of IIHS, examined urban ecology and sustainable school practices. The event was then brought to a close with AMI Primary Trainer Ramya Sridhar's take on how Montessori environments are instrumental in creating responsible citizens of the world.

"It was a beautiful experience to listen to these great speakers to enrich our understanding of the pedagogy and make our belief stronger", rejoices Jaspreet Kaur. Prakriti proved to be an inspiring, rejuvenating and meaningful gathering of the Montessori community!



A vibrant set of stalls, inclusive of Montessori handmade and manufactured materials across ages, Montessori books, children's books and furniture, sustainable stationery, produce from adolescent farm school, were thronged by the participants who looked to make additions to their classroom/home



A panel discussion, focusing on the importance of an outdoor environment and related experiences saw AMI Trainers across ages share both theoretical foundations and practical examples



IMF Trustee Kamini Sundaram sharing a token of appreciation to AMI Board Member Anuradha Shankar



Students from many batches over the years striking a pose with their trainers



A big bunch of enthusiastic volunteers from across the country formed the backbone and ground force of the event



Translating 'The Age of Miracles'

Simona Nicolae

Simona Nicolae, AMI Montessori 3-6 guide and Trainer-in-training, shares her experience and reflections on her journey throughout the translation process of the book, The Age of Miracles from English to Romanian.

Since 2019, my professional journey has been directed towards becoming an AMI trainer for the 3 - 6 years level. In April last year, I had the privilege of advancing my training at the Navadisha Montessori Foundation in Chennai, India. During the first module of the course in April 2023, I explored the history of Montessori's lectures in Sri Lanka, whose dissemination into print profoundly impacted my understanding. In exploring this book, I found it remarkably clear in conveying a consistent message from Maria Montessori – that education should serve as a support for life.





Eager to share this newfound knowledge, I engaged in comprehensive discussions with my colleagues at Montessori School of Iasi, sharing passages and fostering insightful dialogues. Additionally, I extended the discourse by translating substantial sections from English to Romanian for friends and family, catalyzing meaningful conversations.

"My journey with the book was transformative. As a first-time parent, it provided invaluable guidance and tangible support for my daughter's early years. Understanding what to observe in my child and ensuring I don't hinder her development became clearer", says mother of toddler on reading the book.

Recognizing the broader impact this knowledge could have, especially for those beyond my immediate circle, I decided to translate the book upon my return to Iasi. The entire Montessori School of Iasi team embraced this initiative, prioritizing the translation project. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Indian Montessori Foundation for granting us the opportunity to disseminate Maria Montessori's teachings in the Romanian language.

*Age of Miracles, containing Montessori's 1944 lectures in Colombo is priced at Rs. 790 and can be purchased at https://montessori-india.org/store/

Photo courtesy: Kyati Shah

Self Care - Stories from Home

Aditi Ganesh

This series brings stories from Montessori homes, of how the environment is prepared for children to function on their own and take care of themselves at varying levels.

Rajeshwari, mother of four year old Taneesh, has gotten her child to be independent with regard to sleeping, preparing for it right from the start.

He was given his own place in the floor bed with his own pillow and a cozy blanket. He had access to a set of books near his bed which the parents read at night. "We also made sure that he got a lot of play time outside in parks daily to expend his energies."

Taneesh became very aware of his bedtime routine as the same series of steps were followed religiously from when he was a baby, irrespective of whether they were home, even during vacation. Taneesh was reminded about his sleeping time around half an hour before. The routine started with cleaning up his work/play space, involving him in setting up the bed for the entire family, followed by his bath, brushing, dressing and reading and ended with a one-story-a-night rule.



Some steps that further helped this process was reading a lot of books from a very young age on titles like 'sleeping, bedtime routine, dreams, and what happens to the body in sleep'. They made sure that he was well-fed and hydrated. The temperature and lighting in the room was also thought through. "We all also thought over and discussed things that happened, bringing a close to the day. Plans were then made for the next, preparing for the new day ahead when he woke up."





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Demystifying Montessori Materials

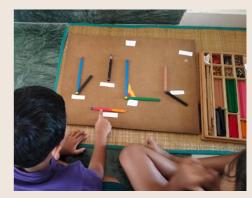
Prabha Karthik

Cosmic Education that is offered in Montessori Elementary (6-12 years) is synonymous to offering the universe with its interdependencies and interrelationships, to the child. Prabha, an AMI Auxiliary Elementary Trainer, shares some of her favourite materials and how the elementary children explore with them.

The Box of Sticks

Our awareness of developmental psychology and characteristics of children at different stages, allow us to offer geometrical concepts (among others) in a way that is accessible to children, at a time when they are interested in them. Therefore Dr. Montessori called this approach 'Psychogeometry'.

Dr. Montessori created objects that represent geometric ideas and qualities that children can work and manipulate with their hands. Since children understand things through working actively with them, these *materialised abstractions* allow them to arrive at an understanding of relationships and ideas just by exploring the material in a systematic way. The Box of Sticks, for example, contain colour-coded sticks of different lengths that represent line segments with which children can construct any kind of polygon.



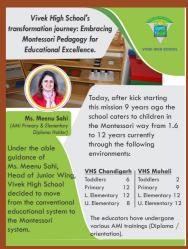
These sticks are used to present the highly abstract concepts of lines, angles and polygons to children. These are not concepts that can be explained to a young child. The impressions made by the materials creates a layer of understanding that can later be built upon. At this age, when their reason and imagination are blossoming, children realise, for example, that a horizontal line segment could be vertical or oblique depending on their point of view. They can experience how the triangle is the most stable of all polygons. So by adding a diagonal, they can actually feel how quadrilaterals can become more stable. When they construct triangles, the colours of the sticks show them whether the triangles are isosceles or scalene or equilateral.

Even though geometry is a subject that requires precision and exactness, the precisely constructed geometry materials allow the children to begin working with and associating different pieces of information even before their drawing skills develop, at a time when their minds are ready and capable of working with them. We present geometry to young children to help develop their logic, reason and clarity of thought, which will in turn percolate to all aspects of their intellectual, moral and social development.















A Parent's Journey in Montessori

Aditi Ganesh

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.

For Divya Ganesh, mother of Yuva Krishnan (2.5 years), Montessori is all about hands-on, concrete and sensorial learning with materials. Having gained knowledge from doing the Montessori course herself, she is aware that the child is given an opportunity to learn at his pace in a mixed age classroom, which provides a great environment for learning.

She initially believed that Montessori was rigid and discouraged children from interacting with each other in the class. But just after a term, on observation, she understood that Yuva had got several opportunities to interact with his peers. Though many activities are individual, there are several other opportunities where they do work in small groups, and other social settings like during lunch and snack, play, having a chat with a friend when not engaged in work and much more. This was indeed an eye-opener for Divya!











AMI Membership

Membership of AMI is open to all individuals. AMI members form an active community with a strong international presence, 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 their latest work and news from across the globe, and discounted offers at congresses, refreshers and other events.

Become part of a worldwide community dedicated to the rights of the child and to supporting human development. Membership fees begin at 40 euros.

To become a member, please visit www.montessori-ami.org

Research Books - Must Haves in Elementary!

Neeharika Patnam

Fact finding through different means in answer to a question that arises within the child is part of the daily work in an elementary classroom. This series brings a resource of research books that lends itself to such quests of children.

Aren't there many kinds of researches?

Here's how I would build the library in my environment! I would pick a few of the books of the collection and also rotate them based on the current needs of the community.

Here is a list of books for children to reflect on inclusivity and acceptance:

- 1. Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You
- 2. Just Help!: How to Build a Better World
- 3. There's also this highly inclusive collection by MaiStoryBooks

For research on the natural world, these are great for lower elementary. These books are simple and the illustrations really inspire children to think about their follow ups!

- 1. Wildlife Anatomy: The Curious Lives & Features of Wild Animals around the World
- 2. A Rock Is Lively
- 3. The Secret Signs of Nature: How to Uncover Hidden Clues in the Sky, Water, Plants, Animals, and Weather
- 4. Incredible Evolution
- 5. The wondrous workings of planet earth

Aligning with these children's characteristics to look upto people and be thoroughly inspired by their grand lives and stories, books like these serve as a great way to help children explore different worlds through their imagination.

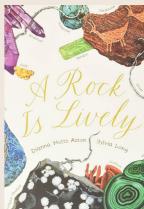
- 1. The Leaf Detective: How Margaret Lowman Uncovered Secrets in the Rainforest
- 2. Evelyn the Adventurous Entomologist: The True Story of a World-Traveling Bug Hunter
- 3. The Boy Who Drew Birds: A Story of John James Audubon
- 4. Snowflake Bentley: A Caldecott Award Winner
- 5. Alice Waters Cooks Up a Food Revolution
- 6. The Girl Who Climbed Mountains Lavanya Karthik

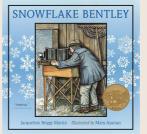
Some more books for the upper elementary:

- 1. A Really Short History of Nearly Everything Bill Bryson
- 2. Unearthed: An Environmental History of Independent India
- 3. Joy of x
- 5. Rohan Chakravarty's books on Green Humor

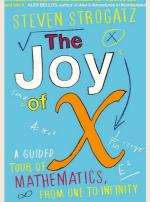
*Neeharika Patnam is an Elementary guide in Kriyasthala, Bangalore and has been working with children since 2018.



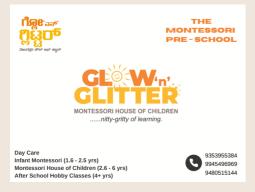


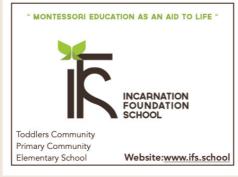






Most of all, I feel it's incredibly important to acknowledge the different ways in which people like to understand information and ideas. Putting out a great variety (not to be confused with quantity) for the children honors this and inspires them to really explore.







What's in the IMF store?

In the quest to bring Montessori philosophy to communities and support schools and training centres, the Indian Montessori Foundation has on sale books, didactic language material and furniture that aids independence in young children. AMI Primary Trainer Hemalatha Rangarajan shares significant quotes from Montessori books and what it can mean to a parent/teacher.

What You Should Know About Your Child:

"The freedom that is given to the child is not liberation from parents and teachers; it is not freedom from the laws of nature or of the state or of society, but the utmost freedom for self development and self-realisation compatible with service to society."

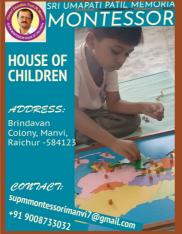
- Maria Montessori, Page 156 Chapter 19

Dr. Montessori emphasises the importance of freedom during the early stages of development. This freedom is not to liberate the child from parents and teachers, but for the inner growth of the child. By offering freedom we help the child to work according to the natural laws that govern the child's growth. They need freedom for their selfdevelopment. They will also use their freedom in service of others. The adults around the child need to be aware of this idea and support the child by offering the right kind of freedom from the very beginning.

All our books can be purchased at events organized by the IMF in your city or at https://montessori-india.org/store/. What You should know about your Child is priced at Rs. 490





















The Moon

Robert Louis Stevenson

The moon has a face like the clock in the hall; She shines on thieves on the garden wall, On streets and fields and harbour quays, And birdies asleep in the forks of the trees.

The squalling cat and the squeaking mouse,
The howling dog by the door of the house,
The bat that lies in bed at noon,
All love to be out by the light of the moon.

But all of the things that belong to the day
Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way:
And flowers and children close their eyes
Till up in the morning the sun shall arise.
The moon has a face like the clock in the hall;
She shines on thieves on the garden wall.
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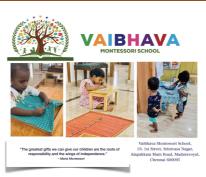
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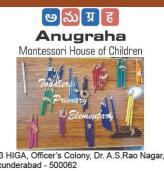


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Ode to Nature - Essays by Children

My Mother Earth

Reyansh (9.4 years)

I like earth and everything it gives; it gives us very much and the topic of my essay is what do I like about my earth and why.

I will tell you all the things I like and the reasons behind them. Firstly, I like the food that mother Earth gives us like seeds, fruits. The food is the fundamental need of all the living organisms. There are many fruits like: apple, orange, passion fruit, litchi, muskmelon, watermelon, every fruit gives us different health benefits and helpful nutrients like sodium, potassium vitamins and minerals like calcium, magnesium, vitamin A, C, E, K.

My second favourite thing about earth is water that mother Earth gives. It hydrates us when we are dehydrated, it also gives us energy when we are really tired. We use water to take bath and wash away germs. No one on the whole planet can live without sweet healthy cool refreshing water.



My third favourite thing about the earth is the nature and the people in it with full of joy. People are there for each other in their sorrows. They love each other and help in each other. It gives shelter to many living organisms. It also decomposes all the dead parts of plants and animals. The Earth also purify the air by the help of plants and always replenishing the need of human beings.

Earth is wonderful planet with all the ecosystem and I can see lot of collaboration among all the living and non-living things. Rivers, mountains, rocks and other land and water forms enhance the beauty of Earth.





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EVENTS 2023-2024

SAT, 15 JUL 2023	4-5 PM	BRINGING UP SELF-CONFIDENT CHILDREN SPEAKER: RUKMINI RAMACHANDRAN	ONLINE
THU, 5 OCT 2023	4-5 PM	PARENTING BEYOND REWARDS	ONSITE
FRI 19 JAN 2024 SAT 20 JAN 2024	10 AM-4 PM	CONFERENCE: PRAKRITI	HHS KENGERI, BANGALORE
SAT 24 FEB 2024	4-5 PM	GUIDING CHILDREN TO MAKE CHOICES SPEAKER: TEENAZ REPORTER	ONLINE

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 to March) and Montessori Matters (Annual Journal).

Communication to target the Montessori community can be published as per the following tariff.

4 issues₹2800	THE TOUCH BOARD (COLOUR; 6X8 CMS) 1 issue₹500 4 issues₹1500 7 issues₹2800	MONTESSORI MATTERS Black and white; (full par 20x12 cms 1 issue₹1000
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The advertisements can be sent to the touch board@gmail.com to reach us on or before the 5th of the previous month.

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