



Working Hands, Building Minds

Child working with cylinders of different dimensions



Navadisha Montessori School

'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

Workshop - 'Classroom Management'

Aditi Ganesh | Chennai

Navadisha Montessori Foundation (NMF) offered a three-day online workshop on this much sought after topic on February 5, 2024. It saw a massive turnout with over 250 participants across different schools and cities. The Training Team, composed of AMI Primary Trainers Rukmini Ramachandran, Ruby Lau, Hemalatha Rangarajan and Ramya Sridhar, reiterated the idea that it is not the adults that should be managing the children, but instead we must offer an environment in which the child can manage themselves.

Many ideas around the different areas and rules of the environment, grace and courtesy, festival celebrations and violence were discussed. The last day was much awaited as it was dedicated to answering questions from the participants.



"It was a wonderful refresher for every Montessorian to reflect on what each one is doing in their classrooms and how to get better at what they are doing." - Priyanka Rajarathinam, Montessori Guide

Workshop - ‘Supporting the Dyslexic Child’

Kavneet Chadha | Bangalore

Montessori Institute of Bangalore (MIB) conducted a two day online workshop led by Alison Awes, AMI Elementary (6-12 years) Trainer on February 15 and 16. Children with dyslexic children need sequential, multi-sensory and explicit experience with the sounds and symbols of our language to read fluently. The richly prepared Montessori environment provides a plethora of language experiences for the Primary and Elementary aged child. The workshop with around 60 participants covered characteristics of dyslexia, recommendations of the US National Reading Panel, and how to support the dyslexic child in a Children’s House and then through Cosmic Education.

Neeharika Patnam, an Elementary Guide shared how Alison spoke from a place of deep experience with children, the merits of committing to the work and upholding consistency. *“The workshop gave us a fair idea of how, and a practical toolkit, to best support children with dyslexia. Now, it is for each of us to put it into practice and see it manifest its magic.”*



“I became more aware that the human environment must be non-judgemental, understanding and empathetic to support a child who finds difficulties in reading.” - Ramya Barithaya, Primary Guide

AMI Primary Orientation Course

Team at Samagna Montessori House of Children | Hyderabad



An orientation course was conducted at Samagna between January 22 and February 3 by Madhavi Latha, Primary Associate Trainer

The course with a balance of theory and practical sessions aimed to introduce Montessori philosophy on the basis of which the Primary (3-6 years) community is fostered. Shravani, a psychologist by profession shares that she is now able to comprehend the importance of honoring and following the child and their natural ways of development. *“I am processing and embracing the beautiful possibilities Montessori methodology can nurture in individuals and societies. Looking forward to pursuing the paradigm professionally and as a stance in life as well.”* Many participants shared how the course had instilled a curiosity to go deeper into the Montessori journey. The same goes with Divya, a mother who was not keen on sending her child to a traditional school and was also doubting her resources to go ahead with homeschooling.

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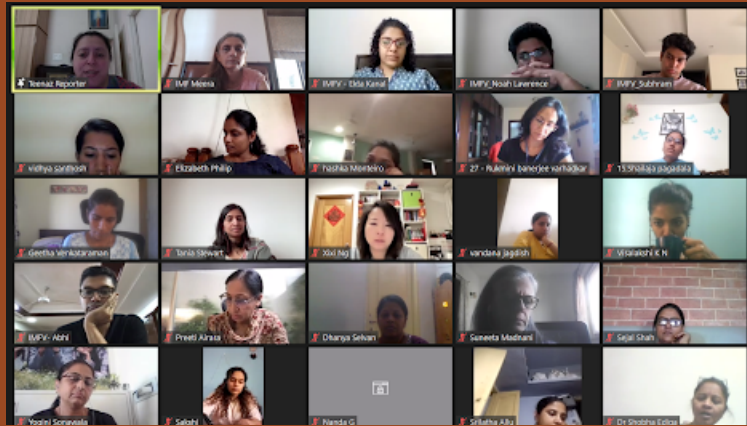
Indian Montessori Foundation IMF

IMF Talk - ‘Guiding Children to Make Choices’

Meera Ghelani | Online

The Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) closed the year with a talk by AMI Primary Trainer Teenaz Reporter on February 24, 2024. She began with the thought that an adult life is all about the choices that we have made and how the art of making choices really stems from our childhood. It develops as a sense of being in control of our own life as we have to live with the consequences of the choices we have made. *“Choices and how it is linked to self construction, intelligence, dignity and also courage to face errors of the choices was my biggest takeaway”*, shares Rukmini Banerjee, Founder of Nivriti in Bangalore.

Deepali Reddy, a Montessori Guide from Hyderabad expressed her gratitude for such talks as it helps to constantly revisit these cornerstones of education. *“Giving children the freedom to choose with limitations is what we have to practice to ensure that children choose within our scope to do things.”* Offering these choices must come from some thought from the adult so that after the child makes a choice, we don’t regret it, she adds.



175 participants from all over India came together to reflect on the ideas behind offering choices to children, the very foundation of Montessori pedagogy

AMI Elementary Orientation Course

Vidhya Ramalingam | Chandigarh

Vivek High School conducted the AMI Elementary Orientation course during the month of January 2024 that was directed by AMI Elementary Auxiliary Trainer, Kamini Kapur. The blended course, with the first week of onsite learning and the second week online, was structured to encompass Montessori theory and practices for the second plane of development. The students on the course who wished Montessori education for all the children of the world, expressed that they could understand that Montessori education is not about imparting knowledge but that there is a spiritual dimension to the intellectual learning, both for the children and for the adults



“I feel honored to be taking forward Montessori’s vision of a harmonious society through presenting the approach to teacher and parent communities. The students’ responses were very insightful and naturally propelled me to spreading Montessori far and wide.” - Kamini Kapur

The onsite week offered the students an excellent opportunity to experience the practical life of an elementary environment. For Preeti Rana, the course was a transformative journey where she learnt the importance of independence and how to foster it by stepping back and letting children take ownership of their learning and also taught her the importance of emotional intelligence in children.

A Parent's Journey in Montessori

Meera Ghelani

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 Riddhi Rambhia, Montessori was just a synonym for a preschool. She had heard that it did not have chairs and tables and she thought it was because they wanted to encourage children to sit and play on the floor on mats like in the earlier times in India.

However when her niece Smaana, started going to a Montessori school, she was amazed to find out that Montessori was completely different. It was not a traditional play school but a way of life. She was very happy to have discovered this pedagogy that inspires to support the child from birth (or even before that) and through the different planes of development. She was enthused to realise that there are Elementary and Adolescent programs as well for children to be similarly supported over the years. This has inspired her to take up the Elementary Diploma soon.





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Dr. Maria Montessori

Self Care - Stories from Home

Kavneet Chadha

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.

Shubhasree Sunder Rajan, mother of 7 year old Maitreya and 5 year old Maadhurya works as an AMI Primary teacher in Bangalore. She shares how she sought to at first understand the developmental changes in her growing children and how to best create an environment that supported their needs and higher levels of independence. *“The concept of independence does not restrict to only in terms of doing, but also extends to thinking for themselves. Independence of the mind and the intellect is pronounced as the child transitions from the ‘what’ questions to ‘why & how’, to learn about their environment.”*

The idea of independence was embedded in the lifestyle of the children. Shubhasree shares an example of how art was set up in a way that the children could organise themselves and then later it extended to them being involved in maintaining the supplies, planning and procurement as well. To begin, the area of work was identified. Color coded boxes for sorting were initiated where the children together decided on the arrangement; like orange box for stationary and art paraphernalia, blue box for chalk, colors etc. Hence the winding up was also in an orderly manner. They could choose from the supplies they had and work when inspired to do so.

The limitations in place were the procurement of supplies; like glitter, glue, paints, colour paper were for a certain period of time. Children planned on how to manage the supplies for the month, and then listed out what was required. We also had discussions of reusing and repurposing the art. There was only one set of each that they shared against the idea of individual supplies. *“This reminds me of an incident when they received two sets of art supplies each, as a return gift when visiting a friend. My older daughter returned one set, saying that one was enough as it would be an excess that can be shared with another person”*



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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.

Fractions

In Montessori, we are guided by the psychology of the child in the way we offer mathematical ideas to him. Dr. Montessori said in her book Psychoarithmetic, the systematic study of mathematics 'both evolves in the child's mind and develops the child's mind itself^[1]'. The study of numbers and the way they work become scientific stimuli that awake a profound logic in children.

When children work with fractions, it is the first time that they work with numbers that are less than one. This idea is an even more abstract concept than numbers. The main piece of fraction material consists of a set of 10 metal circles. The whole fraction is a whole piece and each of the other circles are equally divided into 2 to 10 pieces. For example, the 4th circle is divided into 4 equal pieces and each is a 1/4. If we take two pieces from the 4th family, we have 2/4ths. The children can see that 1/4th is larger than 1/7th in a very concrete way.



Children spend a lot of time finding equivalent fractions before being introduced to all four operations with fractions – addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, and practice for as long as they need to through a variety of activities – labelling the materials, tracing them on paper, or drawing, cutting and sticking fractions on cardstock or making booklets out of them or in any other way they can think of. Abstract ideas such as how when we divide by a fraction, the quotient becomes larger and when we multiply by a fraction, the product becomes smaller than the number we begin with, can be experienced by the children as they use the manipulative material.

Making up their own problems really helps them to understand the concept better than when they mechanically follow the steps to solve problems that have been assigned to them. There are many pieces of material in the elementary that help children deepen and consolidate their knowledge of fractions, and the work with fractions continues for many years as the children gradually arrive at abstraction.

[1] Montessori, Maria, Psychoarithmetic, The Montessori Series Volume 20, Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company, The Netherlands, 2016, page xv editor's notes

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Approach to Mistakes

Roopa Sundar, Kavneet Chadha & Meera Ghelani

Errors are part and parcel of the process of learning that disappear with time as the child becomes adept. In this series, Montessori teachers share how mistakes are approached in the classroom and how children are empowered in this process.

Many times in the Primary environment, when the adult observes that handling things or social graces need to be highlighted for the smooth functioning of the classroom, they have groups called the Grace and Courtesy groups. For instance, when a child needs help with rolling the mat, or turning pages of a book, or to fill water from a dispenser, instead of the child being focussed on individually, these are offered in groups. The adult shows 'how to...' and the children take turns in doing the same.

Farzana Virani shares how she sat down and observed when there were a lot of spills in her classroom. She realised that lunch involved so many skills; bending down to eat, the folding of napkins and carrying the spills to be emptied, the clean up after. She then began showing each of the processes to groups of children and slowly the spills began to reduce.

To Roli Arun however, such a group proved to help in other ways too. She noticed a child taking numbers and counters activity and would try and set it up in an orderly manner with great interest. Many times because of the size of the mat, the numbers wouldn't fit. "I did not try to correct him but one day invited him to arrange the mat stand with me. After rolling a few mats he came across the long mat that is usually used for this work. We both saw the mat and commented on the length." The next time that the child took his work he chose the long mat. After pursuing for a few times on the long mat he was able to set it up such that the numbers were equidistant and the counters were arranged in an orderly manner. Connecting the idea of the length of the mat and repeating the work helped him to do the work with perfection.





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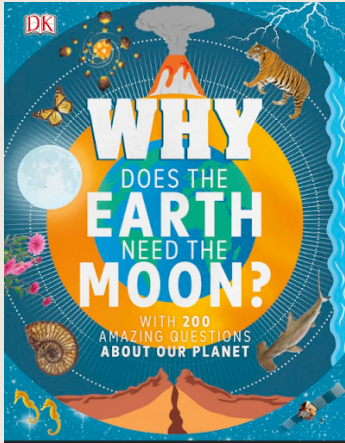
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Research Books - Must Haves in Elementary!

Pratima Jori

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.

Have you ever wondered why the Earth has a moon? What would our planet be like without gravity? Devin Dennie's book explores these fascinating questions about the earth in a way that is sure to spark the imagination of young children. This book is designed for children in lower elementary (6-9 years), as it addresses many questions they often have about the solar system and earth. It uses simple language and engaging illustrations to explain complex concepts.



While the book covers many geography-related topics, it also delves into the past, present, and future of the Earth. This helps children to develop a well-rounded understanding of our planet and its place in the universe. Each chapter includes a 'quick quiz' that allows children to test their understanding of the topic. This interactive approach helps to reinforce learning and keep children engaged.

'Why Does the Earth Need the Moon?' by Devin Dennie, published by DK Children is available on Amazon at Rs 599.

Pratima Jori, works in the elementary community at Nashik, Maharashtra

A M I M e m b e r s h i p

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.

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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.

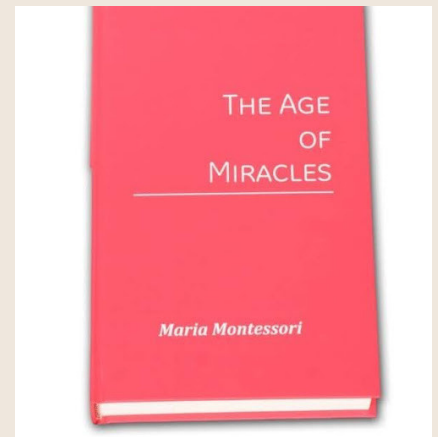
The Age of Miracles:

"One can appreciate the misunderstandings between the adult and the child. The adult has a purpose behind every one of his actions, while the child carries out his actions not for the apparent purpose of the adult, but for his own inner development. Therefore the two come into conflict and indeed violent conflict, from the commencement of the child's activities."

- Maria Montessori, Page 232, Chapter 14

Many of the activities done by young children are not seen by adults as meaningful exercises. Children repeat activities like climbing stairs or sweeping the floor for no apparent reason. However adults perform activities only for a definite purpose for a result that can be achieved. We are not able to see the same purpose when it comes to children. Dr. Montessori draws our attention to the child's inner purpose in carrying out these activities with no outward goal. Through such repetition an inner development takes place within the child. Since adults are not able to see this inner formation a huge misunderstanding occurs between the adult and the child.

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Hearty Congratulations to Kavya Chandrasekar!



Kavya Chandrasekar is now an AMI Assistants to Infancy Auxiliary Trainer.

She shares how deeply she values the learning gathered over two decades by working with parents, infants and children across varied ages. The Training of Trainers program, further provided the opportunity to work with adults and deepen her understanding of Montessori's vision for peace through education. *"In the coming years, I look forward to spreading the scope of Montessori work in India at 0-3 level - it is exciting and deeply rewarding!"*




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 - Maria Montessori

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"The child is endowed with unknown powers, which can guide us to a radiant future. If what we really want is a new world, then education must take as its aim the development of these hidden possibilities."



Dr. Maria Montessori

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Ode to Nature - Essays by Children

One thing that I could change about my earth

Tia, Kashika, Arush, 11 years, Bangalore

Any theory about the earth never ending will always happen to be false whether we like it or not. It is not entirely our fault. Although it is mostly our fault. But there is a cycle of rebirth and death which applies to every planet in the Universe. The only thing we did was to speed up the end of our little blue planet.

Would you like to know how? It does matter so that's why I am telling you the answer.

As we adapted, developed and advanced, we started turning careless on the consequences by using plastics, fossil fuels and many other things. Then having no other option we started polluting our oceans and we started polluting our air. Leading to diseases like viruses and strokes and extinction of many animals. Now we are running low on our resources. Surely our little blue planet will come to an end but it is never too late to change our ways.



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|------------------------------------|--------------|--|--|
| 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 | IHS KENERI, BANGALORE |
| SAT 24 FEB 2024 | 4-5 PM | GUIDING CHILDREN TO MAKE CHOICES SPEAKER: TEENAZ REPORTER |  ONLINE |

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