

Exploration in Collaboration

Children understanding the needs of plants through an experiment



Photo Courtesy - Anugraha Montessori HOC

The photo series brings you a glimpse of Elementary (6-12 years) communities where children work collaboratively in their quest for intellectual, social and moral independence.

Workshop: 'Through the Hand to the Mind - Supporting the Child's Intelligence'

Kavneet Chadha | Online/Bangalore

The Montessori Institute of Bangalore held a one day workshop on January 18, where AMI Primary Trainer Anahita Gandhi delved into the intricacies of nurturing the child's intelligence in a Montessori Environment. The idea was to explore innovative techniques and practical strategies designed to empower young minds while pinning down the hand as the source of creation of the child's character.

Arunmai Nara from Hyderabad felt that the somatosensory homunculus reiterated the importance of the correspondence between the movement and intelligence



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Workshops- ‘Anchoring School Policies in Montessori Principles’; ‘Presenting Indian Languages – Theory & Practice’; ‘Baby and Me’

Swathi Raghav & Roopa Sundar | Chennai



Cheryl Ferreira with decades of experience focussed on the potential of the child, anatomy of hearing and speaking, beginnings of language and dived into the practical aspects that come into play in the classroom

January saw multiple workshops brought forward by Supraja Montessori Study Centre. It began with AMI Primary Trainer Cheryl Ferreira deciphering the process of offering multiple languages in a Montessori environment. *“The emphasis on extensive preparation and inspiration to enrich the child’s language and how our work has to extend to every single child was something that really stood out for me”*, shares Anju Asokan. Many times we begin languages other than English too late with a limited range of activities while research suggests that embracing linguistic diversity promotes neurological developments.



The workshop was an initiative to equip parents of infants to holistically support the development of the child

The Baby and Me workshop saw a small group of parents come with their babies to a prepared space that was designed for babies to explore. Topics related to child development were discussed focussing on preparing home environments that are developmentally appropriate for babies.

The training team at Supraja presented a two day workshop on school policies with a mix of students, teachers and school heads. The key ideas ranged from the importance of planning the complete school year, the role of the adult and the environment in catering to the needs of the child and the need for observation, reflection and interpretation. *“Methods for engaging children in festival celebrations that are so predominant in our culture were practical and inclusive, ensuring that children could participate in a meaningful way”*, shares Aishwarya Janarthanam, who heads Redwood Montessori. She feels that it is their duty to hold Montessori principles not just as a set of methods, but as a practice rooted deeply in empathy and mindfulness.



“

“It was a reminder that when we approach education from a place of humility and openness, we create an environment that fosters genuine connection and understanding. This enables all the entities in the ecosystem to grow - the children, teachers, and the parents.” - Aishwarya

IMF Talk - ‘Setting Boundaries - Road to Self Discipline’

City Reporters | Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai

The new year began with parent communities across cities engaging in discussions surrounding establishment of clear and achievable boundaries for children. AMI Trainers focused on consistent boundary setting through which parents can foster a sense of security and self-regulation in children. Overall, the talk was a thought-provoking reminder of the critical role boundaries play in shaping self-disciplined, confident, and responsible individuals.



Hemalatha Rangarajan highlighted that emotions should not dictate boundary-setting; instead, rules should be established calmly and upheld even in challenging situations



“Madhavi Ravinder took us parents through modelling positive behaviour and where and how to set boundaries, a learning curve for each of us” - Syed Ali



“Kavya Chandrasekhar shed light on how boundaries vary for children across different planes of development and what truly resonated with me was her perspective on how saying ‘No’ the right way can be both healthy and empowering” - Ritika R



“As a parent, we need to be more involved and more present with children in terms of the need to slow down and be patient” - Pushkar Gupta on his takeaway from Suneeta Madnani’s sharing

In Conversation with Jip Bartels

Jip Bartels is the Co-Founder & Trainer of Montessori Sports. He is a former professional football player at AFC Ajax and the national youth teams of the Netherlands with over 20 years of experience. After pioneering Montessori Sports Programmes in Australia, Jip has continued the global mission of Montessori Sports alongside colleagues Ruben Jongkind and Patrick Oudejans. Jip holds the AMI 6-12 Montessori Orientation (2018), AMI Administration (2023) and AMI Core Principles (2024) certificates.



How does sports align with Montessori principles?

First, I want to ask you to take any image you might have of traditional sports and throw it out the window. Professional sports on television are mainly entertainment for adults and cannot simply be 'copy-pasted' onto children. We acknowledge that many coaches are 'unprepared' to work with children, and there's a general issue with the narrow definition of competition: "I win when you lose." It's often the number one question a child gets after a game: "Did you win?"

Now, let's put on our Montessori glasses and envision a child-centred sports environment. When we apply Montessori principles, sports can be a playful way for children to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. They learn how to collaborate, manage their emotions, build resilience, and stay true to their values and strategies under pressure.

We have found over 30 quotes across more than 10 publications from Maria Montessori where she clearly expresses her views on sports (children need it), physical education (education is never only physical, and movement must have purpose), and competition (it can foster moral progress as opposed to aimless play). On the AMI website, you can find many of these quotes on sports. <https://montessori-ami.org/resource-library/quotes/movement-and-sports>

Additionally, arts, music, and dance are already widely accepted in Montessori environments. But sports are also part of that family, as they offer purposeful movement to the child. Sports allow children to express their personality, emotions, and feelings.

Moreover, sports are a genuine interest of children and an integral part of our culture. Sports and local games need to be part of Montessori to support children in self-constructing their personalities, adapting to their culture, and finding their place in society. With global interest in sports at an all-time high, alongside growing issues like childhood obesity and dropout rates from sports, we see an opportunity. The opportunity, and perhaps the responsibility, is to harness children's interest in sports and apply Montessori principles to combat sedentary lifestyles, obesity, and dropouts.

To conclude, we believe that 'sports are a key to educating human potential.'



What is your advice on introducing sports to young children at home?




We don't focus on specific sports for children aged 0 to 6, but instead on fundamental movement abilities that prepare them for the introduction and exploration of sports in the 6 to 12 age group. As a parent, be a role model and provide ample movement opportunities at home. However, we do caution against early specialization. Too often, we see children aged 2 to 5 already introduced to a single sport. Parents think this will help their child excel in that sport as an adult. Unfortunately, this isn't true, as the child will develop one-sided physically and mentally, which can lead to injuries, reduced interest, and eventually dropping out.

For ages 6 to 12, ensure they have the opportunity to explore different sports. Maybe arrange a few trial sessions, as they are likely to switch interests often. Forcing your child to stay in a sport because they (or you?) have committed can lead to an aversion to that sport. There are other times and places to teach the importance of "finishing what you started."

For ages 12 to 18, it's about providing them with opportunities to do sports, but also recognizing that your role as a parent has changed. They still need you for safety (and as a driver), but they also need to become independent from their families. So, support them, but don't get too involved. Remember their sensitivity at this age, and that it's their game, not yours.

You are here in India for the Montessori Sports Training Programme. So what is your take on Montessori sports in India?

Since the launch of our online training in 2020, we have had a significant number of graduates from India. It's amazing to meet so many of them as I travel through Hyderabad and Bangalore to run our blended format for the first time in India. With our work, we contribute to the Bold Goal for India that IMF and AMI established in October 2023. I'm looking forward to returning to India and working with various centers across the country. There is such a rich history of Montessori in India, and it feels like a privilege to contribute.

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-Maria Montessori

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Demystifying Montessori Materials

Vidhya Ramalingam

A Montessori classroom offers a wide range of developmental aids whose aims are more than what meets the eye. This series brings to light why some materials are set up and how they are used by the children in a Primary Montessori community (3-6 years).

Puzzle maps

Given the vastness of the world, it is impractical to visit every location to learn about them. The maps and their related activities help us explore places instead! Puzzle maps are a set of maps that include the world map, individual continent maps and country maps. The maps are made of wood with knobbed puzzle pieces, each representing a specific geographical region, such as a continent, state or a country. Children remove the interlocking puzzle pieces from the frame and assemble them back together. Through working with the puzzle maps, children get to see, touch and feel the shapes, sizes and the spatial relationship of continents, oceans, countries, and states. As they repeatedly solve the puzzles, they engage their critical thinking skills through comparing, discriminating, evaluating and making informed decisions, leading to development of intelligence.

First children are introduced to a globe giving them the big picture of the world being made up of land and water. Then, they move on to the world puzzle map, where they learn to translate the globe's spherical shape into a flat hemisphere map, making connections between the two. This is then followed by the various continent and country maps. We hope that what begins with just solving puzzles will spark the child's interest in knowing the names of places, their capitals, flags, flora and fauna, food habits, the culture of the people and the intricate relationships between different regions and communities. It is amazing to see and hear children light up in excitement when they use the puzzle maps to show where they've travelled! They love to put their fingers on the map to trace their routes while sharing their travel experiences.



Nature Connect – Resources to Explore

Anju Asokan

Children arrive into human habitats that exist amidst the glory of nature, nestled in an envelope of biodiverse organisms. This series seeks to bring the reader closer to nature with a line up of resources that educate and entertain.

Koogoo – Innovative Learning Card Game

Rooted in nature and wildlife, the games in **Kadoo.in** make safaris and animal sightings much more meaningful and lively. Specifically, the Koogoo card game makes itself useful for children as a fun travel game or to brighten up playtime and get-togethers. These cards cater to children above the age of 6. Anywhere between 2 to 6 players can draw 7 cards each, of the 110 available cards. They are to finalise one task - make a complete food chain. The first one to make the set has to shout 'Koogoo' to win. In a stretch of 20 minutes, children are exposed to the workings of a food chain while increasing their awareness about the wild. Needless to mention, card games are an absolutely fun way to bond! Koogoo is available for **Rs. 249 on their webpage**.

Apart from this game, the website's shop hosts a series of other games, most of which are nature and jungle related. They also have pocketbooks that could come of assistance during a safari. Find these at www.kaadoo.in



Good Reads – Books for Under Three

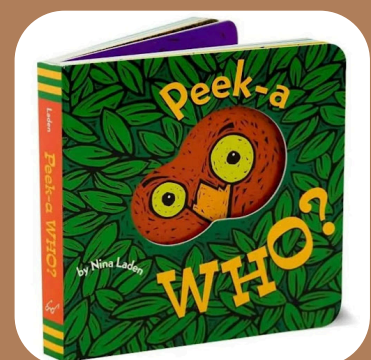
Seema Murli Narang & Roopa Sundar

Books are an essential and beautiful inclusion in any home and community. This series brings to you book suggestions that come highly recommended for infants (below 1 year) and toddlers (1 to 3 years).

'Peek-a-who?' by Nina Laden is a lovely addition to a baby's collection who always enjoy the idea of hiding and seeking. The cut out windows spike the curiosity of what lays ahead, revealing the complete picture. The limited number of pages and the one line rhyming text keeps for a quick read. The mirror at the end of the book acts as a lovely surprise.

It is a sturdy perfectly sized board book accompanied by vibrant illustrations. The reader can also choose to name the illustrations or talk about what they see in the book, based on the baby's interest. There are similar books in this series like 'Peek-a-zoo'.

**The writer is a Early Years Educator and an infant mother*





Understanding the Adolescent

Chaithanya Yalamanchili

This segment aims to throw light on the needs of adolescents as they integrate academics with purposeful work and prepare to become contributing citizens who are self-confident and possess skills needed to thrive in society.

Role of the Adult

Adolescence is a period of great transformation—physically, emotionally, and intellectually. Adults must first understand these changes to effectively meet the adolescent's needs, fostering independence while providing an environment for them to grow and develop.



Respect is central in interactions with adolescents. Dr. Montessori emphasizes giving them more respect than they deserve, which nurtures their confidence and self-worth. By treating them as capable individuals, we are setting them on a path of self-realization and integration into society.

Practical, meaningful work which benefits the society is essential in adolescent development. Engaging them in real-world tasks, such as cultivation, helps them see their contribution to society. Working side by side with them rather than simply instructing helps the adolescent achieve tasks with increasing levels of independence. Providing opportunities to experience different professions broadens their understanding of societal roles, fostering appreciation for different occupations.

Adolescents require order in their environment as they navigate internal changes. A structured yet flexible approach allows them to develop discipline while fostering creativity. Encouraging environmental stewardship teaches responsibility and care for their surroundings. Adolescents should have access to an environment that they can modify to fulfill their needs.

Ultimately, adults must set adolescents up for success by creating a safe space for exploration, ensuring that challenges are developmentally appropriate and attainable. With patience, respect, and meaningful engagement, adults can guide adolescents toward self-sufficiency and a deep connection to their community.

Chaithanya Yalamanchili heads the Erdkinder program at Pragnya Montessori School, Hyderabad. He holds an AMI diploma in elementary education and Adolescent studies. He also holds a bachelor's degree in Engineering and a master's degree in Mathematics.

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 queries to help us in this journey.

Young children like to eat their own food in a new place: is there a way that we can support them to try different cuisines?

Pavithra Rajagopalan - AMI primary trainer

Our own relationship with food largely dictates our children's. Very often, families commune around food. There is a lot of tradition and cultural life that is tied around food as well. So, in helping children have a healthy and happy relationship with food, we do not need to reinvent the wheel. What we do need to do though, is examine this relationship for ourselves and mark out entry or highlight points for the children in their own journey. This has to be a deliberate exercise.

Some of these are introduction to solid foods, introduction to new tastes, sitting at a table for the first time, serving themselves, setting the table, helping in food preparation, shopping for ingredients, going to a restaurant, choosing from a menu. These 'milestones' when we pause and mark them for ourselves, we will find are many. Some are celebrated, some go unnoticed. But if the deliberate thought around creating happy experiences in all of the above instances is there, we are helping children as they need to be.

All of these experiences help children also use their capacities for being purposefully engaged and also understand the world around them better. To this foundation, when they are ready, in each of these experiences, we could introduce a new taste of something - literally and figuratively; a fruit that I haven't tasted before, a cuisine that is new to me, a spice that I am not familiar with, finding a new recipe, etc. We have to bear in mind that we do this for the right reasons - to help children make a connection with food and carry on exploring as they grow older, and not to satisfy our own sometimes misguided, albeit well-meant reasons of how much food they should eat, or how well they should behave at a dinner table.



Prepared Social Experiences

Aditi Ganesh


A child's life very soon extends beyond the immediate home and into the larger society. How can this transition be enjoyable by all parties? In this series parents and teachers share their strategies for preparation and planning for these new social experiences.



Home visits, both guests coming into our space or we going into someone else's space needs some level of planning and preparation with young children. Very young children many times do not like their things being used by another child or need to be guided about taking turns. Beyond four, we see them getting more comfortable with using each other's toys. "I try to keep it short and simple and focus on the few things which are really important to us for the visit - like keeping his voice low, or that running around might not be okay, or that there might be a dog there," shares Khyati Shah. Whichever the situation may be, it is good to involve the child in preparing the home for the guests or preparing to visit others, like carrying a token of love.

Since her son is about 1.5 years old, he hasn't seen many other babies. He is the baby who usually everyone else is gentle with or gives him what he wants. "We recently went to visit his baby cousin who is a year younger than him and we spoke about how the baby is small and we need to touch him gently, not grab his toys. At the visit, of course they were all playing together and I saw how when the baby grabbed from him or he tried to grab back and we reminded him that he's a baby and those are the baby's toys, he paused and let it go and just picked something else to do. It wasn't all the time but a quick reminder was all he needed and I believe it was because we had already had the conversation before."

Sunetra, mother of 2 year old Mihira gives a detailed explanation of where they are going, what they will do there, how long they can expect to be there, who else will be there, etc. It helps them to know exactly what to expect so that they are not taken into surprise by anyone or anything. When guests visit, and usual routines get affected such as not being able to go to the playground or guests being in the house during bedtime, preparation prevents from getting upset and acting out, and also helps to get better cooperation. "While traveling, we take books and toys from home to provide something familiar in the new environment."



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Sat 20th July 2024	Talk	Montessori Education - Its relevance today	Online
Thu 31 August 2024	Talk	The Significance of the Hand in Education	Online
Thu 12 September 2024	Talk	Understanding Adolescents - Jenny Hoglund	Onsite - Chennai
Thu 12 September 2024	Talk	Path to Self Expression- Role of Language in Development Speaker - Teenaz Reporter	Onsite - Hyderabad
Thu 12 September 2024	Talk	Path to Self Expression- Role of Language in Development Speaker - Anahita Gandhi	Onsite - Bangalore
Thu 19 September 2024	Talk	Path to Self Expression- Role of Language in Development Speaker - Zarin Malva	Onsite - Mumbai
Sat 23 November 2024	Talk	Transitions in Montessori and Beyond	Online
Thu 5 December 2024	Workshop	AMI Students Orientation Present work of IMF	Online
Thu 23 January 2025	Talk	Setting Boundaries - Road to Self Discipline (3-6 topic) Speaker - Kavya C	Onsite - Bangalore
Thu 23 January 2025	Talk	Setting Boundaries - Road to Self Discipline (3-6 topic) Speaker - Madhavi Latha	Onsite - Hyderabad
Thu 23 January 2025	Talk	Setting Boundaries - Road to Self Discipline (3-6 topic) Speaker - Hemalatha Rangarajan	Onsite - Chennai
Thu 23 January 2025	Talk	Setting Boundaries - Road to Self Discipline (3-6 topic) Speaker - Suneeta M	Onsite - Mumbai
Sat 22 February 2025	Talk	A Day in a Montessori Environment	Online

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