

Exploration in Collaboration

Children realising the age of the earth compared to the age of humans with a representational material called black strip



Photo Courtesy - Da Vinci Montessori

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.

City Events

Talk - 'Recognising the Child's Individuality'

Aditi Ganesh | Chennai/Online

Supraja Montessori Study Centre organized their very first talk of the year on August 2, 2024. AMI Primary Trainer Rukmini Ramachandran defined the idea of 'Individuality', and how it takes different forms depending on each scenario and stage of development. She also dwelled on how everybody strives to be independent but are often carried away by fear. *"The idea that we have to have faith in our child and let our fears go when we want to raise an individual stood on my mind"*, shares Gokiladevi V, a Primary guide.

A brief about the upcoming courses was shared, followed by questions from the audience on aspects of fears as teachers, the amount of freedom to be given, and the idea of refraining from using the word - 'no' too many times.



The online session had over 230 participants, uniting everyone on a single forum to discuss one central topic - the child.

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Indian Montessori Foundation IMF

Workshops - 'Embroidery' & 'Book Binding'

Kavneet Chadha | Bangalore

Montessori Institute of Bangalore (MIB) offered workshops in July and August to provide guides and anyone interested in building creative skills and capacity to utilise in their environment. They were curated keeping in mind that the work of the hand opens many opportunities for learning within the home and in our classrooms. The sessions were led by Sneha Susan John, owner of The Stitchery Room who left the corporate sector to pursue her hobby of learning and teaching embroidery.

"It was my first experience with embroidery and I learnt five stitches", shared an excited Sudha Rajesh. While the Embroidery workshop focused on the basics of multiple stitches, the Book Binding workshop aimed to equip beginners with essential tips and techniques for easy and complex book binding, binding without needles and bringing together embroidery and book binding.



"I took up this workshop as my daughter shows great interest in needle work and I hope to be able to practice to further my skills and work along with her." - Sudha Rajesh, Mother and 0-3 Guide



Having learnt the Coptic and Japanese bookbinding, Rashmi Krishnaswamy shared how she was inspired by the deep passion for embroidery and book binding shared by the team

AMI Administrators Course

Kavneet Chadha | Bangalore

MIB held the first 'AMI Administrators Course' in India in July 2024. The nine day course was facilitated by Bill Conway, AMI Administrator Course Lead Trainer and Samantha Streak, Trainer in Training who have decades of experience in the education sector in different capacities. The participants began by understanding the underlying principles which guide Montessori education, then looked at how schools vary from other education institutions and other education pedagogies. The course also addressed the kinds of skills an administrator needs to be effective in a Montessori setting.



Deepika Prasanna was grateful to be part of this gathering which included many school heads and those who aspired to lead, as it was not only an opportunity to learn from the trainers but also from the participants in many group discussions, reflections and reading. *"When Montessori school leader's core aspect is working for the child, they can envelop Montessori principles in their interactions with society, understanding the needs of the community, mutually respect, listen actively, observe, plan strategically, communicate for cohesion and most importantly be major contributors to the greater society",* added Rajitha Jagarlamudi, who currently works with adolescents.

To the delight of the participants, students from Kriyasthala Adolescent Center for Work and Study set up a refreshment stall at the premises. The adolescents took up the opportunity and planned from drawing up the menu, working the costing and process and also chalking out a seamless self service system so that they could get back to their work center once it was set up.

The course saw over 40 participants from different parts of India, Somalia, Indonesia and China come together to examine the unique aspects of leading a Montessori program

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.



Palluyir Trust

Palluyir literally translates to 'biodiversity' or 'all of life' in Tamil. Aligning with their belief of 'sharing/coexisting and protecting biodiversity being the essence of all our hoarded wisdom', they have tools that will help stir a dialogue, one that reimagines learning and living in a spirit of togetherness.

Apart from their nature-education sessions, their website houses an interesting biosphere based card game called "The Wilderness" where players need to protect their habitat and build an ecosystem as assigned to them by the card they draw. Their shop also sells a collection of field guides on butterflies, coastal fauna, common marine fishes, trees, wildflowers and marshland birds. Twelve year old Havish shares "While I knew a few already, this game introduced me to many more ecosystems, the diverse animals in it and their compositions. The cards work in such an engaging and fun way, at some point we played it everyday!"



They also have downloadable, printable nature-educational resources of games, posters of common fungi, insects, bird beaks, bird feet, and tree barks, which are free of cost.

Find them on <https://palluyirtrust.org/>, their products range from Rs 200/- to Rs 450/-

These are priced from Rs 35 to Rs 1500. You can shop them on <https://ncf-store.zohocommerce.in/>

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Children and Safety

Dr Chetan Ginigeri, Consultant Pediatrics & Pediatric Intensive Care Unit of Aster Hospital, shares tools to be equipped with by different parties for safeguarding children. Contact Dr Chetan at drchetanmd@yahoo.com.

Childproofing Your Home: Do It The Right Way - I

It is an enjoyable phase for both baby and parents when the baby starts crawling and moving forward towards his first step. But that feeling of joy comes along with the feeling of fear of injuries. So, it becomes a crucial time to be more attentive to household objects as the most innocuous become a threat to your crawling baby. This involves many aspects other than a few latches and corner guards.



Childproofing the Kitchen: Burns can be very painful for a toddler. Keep your child away from hot cooking utensils. Do not keep hot beverages near your child. After cooking, close the kitchen so that the child does not enter unsupervised. Keep away all sharp objects like pins, knives, etc.

Childproofing the Bathroom: Install anti-scalding devices on faucets and showerheads. Besides, adjust the water heater thermostat to 120 degrees. Remember, a toddler exposed to 140-degree water for even a duration of 3 seconds can end up in a three-degree burn! Cover up unused electrical outlets in the bathroom with outlet protectors or safety caps. Don't let the bathroom door shut fully to avoid door slamming.

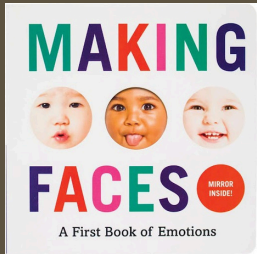
Childproofing Your Home From Poisons: Poisoning can be life-threatening. Children have a habit of putting everything in their mouths, whether it's edible or not. Keep all the medicines and cleaners at a great height. Keep all the insecticides, mosquito refills, and rat kills away from the reach of children.

Good Reads – Books for Under Three

Sampoorna Vembunathan

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).

'Making Faces - A First Book of Emotions' by Abrams Appleseed is a board book for infants and toddlers with photographs of real babies with face expressions of different emotions. The white backgrounds provide maximum contrast for the photos, which readily telegraph each emotion, and an embedded mirror lets children see their own happy, silly, and other emotive expressions.



This is an interactive book that engages children. For example, on the left side of one page, photograph of a baby with surprised emotion with the text, "Look at the surprised baby. Can you make a surprised face?" written and on the opposite page we are asked to find the same 'surprised' baby. Toddlers love matching the identical picture. The last page includes a mirror where babies love seeing themselves making their favourite emotions.



*The writer is a Montessori educator and homeschooling mother

Bitten by the History Bug

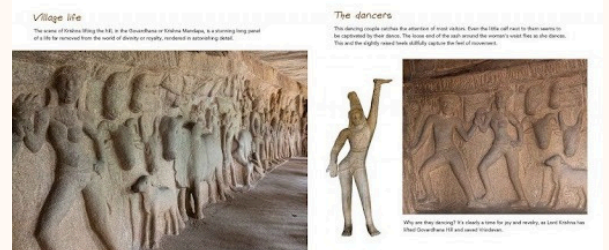
India is home to innumerable heritage sites that have stood the test of time. This series highlights some of these grand marvels that tell stories of human life and work with some references that children can reach to on visiting these places.

Mamallapuram

Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram, is situated on the Coromandel coast, 58 kms to the south of Chennai. It was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1984 for its stunning range of monuments standing tall for a 1000 years that include stone rathas (temples in the form of chariots), mandapas (cave sanctuaries), and the famous Shore temple carved on granite rocks during Pallava reign.



There is some preparation that takes the children from just 'seeing' such monuments to truly engaging in them; books offering such a scope. Part of Tulika's 'Looking at art' series, 'Sculpted Stones - Mysteries of Mamallapuram' is a perfect book for the ever questioning and curious Elementary children. Other than offering facts, the book invites the reader to explore the stories behind the iconic landmarks that dot the landscape of this historic town. **"Many of the questions posted in the book are those which were first raised by the children on the trips"**, Ashwin Prabhu tells TeacherPlus

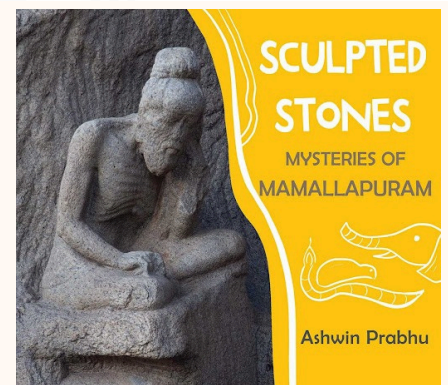


Another book that offers a detailed background of the site is the **'ASI World Heritage Series; Mahabalipuram'** by C Sivaramamurthi.

Source:

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/204830407-sculpted-stones---mysteries-of-mamallapuram>

<https://www.tamilnadutourism.tn.gov.in/destinations/mahabalipuram>



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).

Short Bead Frame

In a Montessori environment, children are seen working with solid, real objects to understand abstract math concepts. It is essential to move on from using real objects to holding quantities in mind for calculations in real life situations. The short bead frame is one such activity that helps children move towards abstraction.

The frame has four horizontal bars having 10 beads each representing the four categories - units, tens, hundreds and thousands. When we write a number, for example 3,758, it is common practice to separate the number families using a comma. Interestingly, this is seen on the material too. The first three bars are evenly spaced to represent the unit family and the fourth bar is a little further apart to represent the thousand family.

While children work on the operations with this material, they understand that infinite large quantities can be involved. "Can I multiply this as many times as I want?" is a question that children sometimes ask with wonder! When they form quantities on the frame and record them, the ideas of place value of numbers in a quantity and zero as a placeholder is strengthened. The journey of the child from using concrete materials to engage with numbers to writing and solving large numbers on paper is fascinating!



Prepared Social Experiences

Vidhya Ramalingam

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.

Family functions and get-togethers are opportunities for children to get familiar with relatives and friends. Certainly, these moments are to be cherished! But, preparing children to be in these spaces would be challenging for its own reasons like the crowd, loud noises, unfamiliar places, gaudy clothes, etc. Shalini Nandakumar, an educator and a mother says that she would start preparing her son well in advance for any function. She would tell him stories related to that particular event and bring up a situation in the story asking him what he would do there. She would closely observe his reactions and answers which help her understand her child better and plan accordingly.



Radhika Gujarathi, mother of a 5 year old says that she prepares her daughter by talking to her about what is the event, who will be joining, what time, what is to be done, how long will it be and when will they be coming back home. She says that this conversation helps her child to prepare mentally and emotionally for the event. Physically preparing the child with proper sleep and rest is essential too. With great delight she shares that the above preparations have helped both the daughter and the parents to thoroughly enjoy a recent family function with pleasant memories.

Shalini Nandakumar, says that her 4 year old son enjoys being with his close knit family members but he is sensitive to loud music and speakers. When the child expresses his discomfort during such times, she would take him out of that place and prefer to give him one or two of his favourite small sized toys that she would carry in her bag. This would help him get diverted and occupy himself with the toys. Sometimes, when the child is restless indoors, she would take him to an open space and look for social connections in the outdoor environment.

"Rules such as 'hands to yourself', 'walking feet' and 'inside voices' are regular things I would remind him irrespective of any situation. Most of the times he understands and relates to it as these rules are not followed only for that situation. He has been introduced to these phrases much earlier and it's not something new for him to follow", asserts Shalini Nandakumar.





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.

Production and Exchange

The primary developmental task of adolescents is to transition into adult society. During this stage, engaging in practical work enables them to become contributing members of the community. By 'contributing members', we imply that adolescents engage in activities that benefit society. These activities often have a financial context, aligning with their developmental need for social and financial independence. The concept of Production and Exchange supports this, aiding adolescents in achieving these goals.

Adolescents identify the needs of their community and provide goods and services to fulfill these needs. In my experience, production and exchange activities have consistently enthused adolescents, who have eagerly undertaken tasks such as cultivation, catering, and soap manufacturing. These activities are led by the adolescents themselves, with adults serving as guides. Adolescents are responsible for planning, executing, and managing the finances associated with these activities, thereby gaining valuable experience and contributing to their community.

Production and Exchange sets adolescents on the path to economic independence. Economic independence, in this context, should be understood as the ability of the adolescent community to manage their finances, ensuring their sustenance. It is crucial for adolescents to understand the role of money in society, recognizing it as a medium of exchange for goods and services. This understanding helps adolescents build a healthy relationship with money.

Engaging in Production and Exchange requires adolescents to research and study various subject areas. Academic work becomes integral to the development of their products, adding context that necessitates further study and learning. For example, when adolescents in my school began making soaps, they investigated different ingredients involved in the soap-making process. They discovered that lather is produced by a chemical called SLES, which can cause skin irritation. Consequently, they researched alternatives and developed SLES-free soaps, which lathered less but were gentler on the skin. Such explorations require adolescents to undertake academic research, thereby aiding their academic development.

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 masters degree in Mathematics.



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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.

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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 queries to help us in this journey.

How do we help a child who does not know what to choose and expects the adult to make the decision for him/her?

Tania Stewart, AMI Primary Trainer



There is no one way to help a child make a decision in any aspect of their functioning in life. It is rather crucial that the adult does not make the choice or decision for the child.

The adults need to exercise patience in not giving in and making decisions for the children. Sometimes it is beneficial to let the children have the time to observe others at work. I would also think that consistent objective observations by adults to discover the child's interest and inclination is essential. Then follows the adults' tactful guidance in helping the child to make a choice based on this interest. This is only possible when the child has the freedom within the predetermined limits of that space and opportunities to fulfill his needs to move, socialise and develop to his potential.

Books in the IMF Corner!

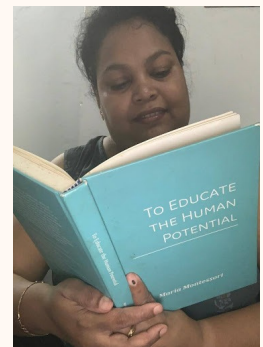
In the quest to bring Montessori philosophy to communities and training centres, the Indian Montessori Foundation has on sale books, didactic language material and furniture that aids independence in young children. AMI students from across the country share how Montessori books have played a role in their journey of learning.

Mary Pauleena Bandila, pursuing AMI Elementary Diploma course

"We have learnt from him certain fundamental principles of psychology. One is that the child must learn by his own individual activity, being given a mental freedom to take what he needs, and not to be questioned in his choice. Our teaching must only answer the mental needs of the child, never dictate them." Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential, Chapter 1, Page 8

The realization of freedom and the understanding of responsibility - these are the points of arrival. The task of helping the child begins at home with the caregivers. It continues into the children's house, on through the 6 to 12 communities into adolescence and beyond.

When we serve this human being as parents and teachers while she self-constructs and builds a personality in the context of the community, we achieve both the individual and also the individual within the group. The basic task of the educator is not to deliver an educational message, but rather to provide an aid to life by leaving that life free to unfold regardless of the course. So, we first help the development of the total personality, and we prepare the individual to find her place in society in such a way that she accepts the responsibility that goes with having freedom in a social context.



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"We, as adults, must play a new role - we must understand that instead of helping the child we only hinder him if we try to mould him directly."
 -Maria Montessori

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EVENTS 2024-'25

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 Høglund	Onsite - Chennai
Thu 12 September 2024	Talk	Path to Self Expression- Role of Language in Development Speaker - Anahita Gandhi	Onsite - Bangalore
Thu 12 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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