



Damariscotta Montessori School

Newsletter

Miss Casey's Primary Class

This week started off in the dark as you all know. Luckily the rest of the week has been illuminating. The children are really starting to work now and are showing their ability to concentrate for greater periods of time which is just right for this time of year. The older children have started bringing home their reading work. The process involves a child reading an early reader or Bob Book to me and then bringing the same book home to read to you. Depending on the child's ability you may see the same book a number of times in a row or throughout a number of weeks. The children really love the idea of bringing home these books and get so excited to be "reading". Some of the children are phonetically sounding out the words while others memorize words or entire books from having heard the story. Both of these processes are beginning reading signs and should be encouraged and greeted with matched enthusiasm.

Miss Sarah's Primary Class

An Overview of Montessori Mathematics

Montessori said that "in its natural state the human mind is already mathematical: it tends toward exactness, measure and comparison." I believe that most adults do not experience this because the math experiences from their youth have turned them off, shut them down, and, out of fear, they have become closed to using the mathematical mind they have been given. Sadly, though we have this innate ability, many of us have given up on using it. Calculators and adding machines become crutches and saviors in a jam.

Happily, our children and those we teach do not have to suffer as many of us did in our mathematical schooling. Maria Montessori developed a mathematical theory which is developmentally in tune with the child, and startlingly accessible. Children begin in the other curriculum areas, preparing for their

"It is true that we cannot make a genius. We can only give to each child the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities.."

Dr. Maria Montessori

The very youngest children who want to be involved but are not developmentally ready for the reading may also be bringing home a book or two because they want to mimic everything the older children are doing. I find this to be a great opportunity to help instill their joy and love of reading. They may want to tell you the story or may just enjoy hearing the story from you.

Bringing home books to share with you helps the children to become and continue to be excited by the joys of reading and also to close the gap between home and school by inviting you to share in your child's discovery of written language. If you have any questions please feel free to let me know.

mathematical exploration with such materials as length rods, the pink tower, metal insets, and the geometric solids. By engaging deeply in practical life and sensorial work, children develop the concentration and motor skills for academic work, such as language and mathematics. The strong sense of order in all areas of the classroom also prepares the child's Mathematical Mind.

The mathematics materials begin by isolating concrete representations of a mathematical concept, then introduce symbols, and then put the two together to create a complete and rounded understanding of mathematical concepts. An example is the number rods (concrete), then the sandpaper numerals (abstract but still tangible), then the number rods and numeral tablets together (abstract.) Although we say that the materials progress from concrete to abstract, it is true of nearly the full range of

Montessori math materials that they are tangible, concrete representations of a concept, which the child may touch and manipulate. The lessons, as all Montessori lessons are presented with exactness and in an orderly fashion so as to aid the child in forming a strong internal sense of order. This order and the possibility for repetition with any material enable a child to take the work alone, at will, and use it until they have gained from it what they can, and completed their work

at that stage of the mathematics curriculum. Then, with another presentation, the child is moving onward, always at his or her own pace. The accessibility, simplicity and clarity of the Montessori mathematics materials nurture a love of math and a sense of self-efficacy in math, which we should wish on all children in their schooling.

Lower Elementary Class

Another busy week has passed in the Lower Elementary. In Science, the Middles and Youngers studied the parts of the sponge; phylum Porifera, the simplest of the invertebrate animals. In Geometry we reviewed the quadrilaterals from the Geometry Cabinet. In Grammar the lesson presented the symbols used to analyze a sentence, which will help us with our reading and writing. For the youngers we dived into that world of action, the verb, which is appropriately represented by a red bouncy ball!

The highlight of our week was Art. Ms. Proffetti showed us a good way to make our own “fossils”. She brought in a selection of objects, including lobster shells and chicken bones, that we pressed into clay to make our fossil molds. Then plaster of paris was poured into the molds. When they hardened, the clay was peeled off. The results really resembled true fossils!

The children are progressing steadily in math and language arts. It is good to see them working at their own pace through the various jobs. It is especially exciting to watch the emergent readers as they become able to read more advanced work. At this age they are making new discoveries every day, from small steps to the occasional leaps! Their knowledge, considerably helped, I’m sure, by all that reading that you parents do at home, surpasses their reading skills at this point, and it is great to see them read and be able to confirm that knowledge for themselves.

I welcome you to our class during parent observation week. It is a great way to see for yourself the hard work of your children.

Upper Elementary Class

This week I’ll take a break from the regular reporting of the academic news for the week and share with you a moment that we had in the class meeting this past week. I will make this disclaimer: This moment was not a monumental one for the children, but for me as an adult who works with kids every day.

We sat down for our regularly scheduled class meeting this Tuesday and started off with “Compliments and Appreciations.” This is a time where children and teachers thank one another and give encouragement to each other. It is a great way to start off the meeting on a positive note.

Once we finished “Compliments and Appreciations” we reviewed a recently discussed problem to follow up and see if it needed any more discussion. It did not; the solution chosen seemed to be working well. The problem that was brought up for this afternoon’s meeting was the “Snack Stealing Committee”. It seems that a number of the children in the classroom had been “stealing” snack from the snack area and eating it throughout the classroom (this problem was actually brought up by a child last year, except it was about me, and some guidelines on how teachers eat snack were developed) They named themselves the “Snack Stealing

Committee” (I’m not sure, but I don’t think there were any formal meetings or officers ☹).

As is part of our class meeting routine, the child who brought up the problem expressed their concern and asked for both feedback and solutions. During the feedback time, other children expressed their concern, some took responsibility for participating, and others attempted to uncover the nature of the problem. In this case, we didn’t really get down to the root of the problem during our feedback time and moved onto solution.

During the solutions portion of the meeting the children brainstorm solutions that meet the “three R’s and an H” model (reasonable, related, respectful and helpful – not punitive). Most of them were pretty basic, “Stop stealing snack.”, “Tell the teacher.”, “Tell them to stop, respectfully.”, etc. When it was my turn I have to admit I was feeling like I wanted to come up with something that would be more punitive (the subconscious idea being that if we make it distasteful enough that the problem will stop –

this rarely works, however, and the behavior usually just becomes more covert). So, I suggested “Abuse snack, you lose it.”

When we reviewed the solutions it was quite evident that my solution was punitive, and thus not helpful. As well, the other solutions did not seem as though they were really going to solve the problem. Someone then asked, “Why are you guys stealing snack?” The answer was humbling: “We’re still hungry after we eat snack.” Wow, did I feel like a heel! The solution to the problem then flowed quickly. The class decided that we will make the portions bigger so everyone gets enough to eat. This was easy because we often have plenty of leftovers. The solution was reasonable, related, respectful and helpful. Most of all it really seemed to solve the problem.

This was one of those times that I just had to sit back and really appreciate the children for their insight, honesty and capability. If given the opportunity, our children can really make a difference. I thank them for their constant reminders of this fact.

From Chip’s Desk

Beginning on Monday, November 6th, we will be implementing our new safety procedures. Since the classroom doors will be locked during the school day, beginning at 8:45 a.m., please check in at the office if you are late, and someone will escort your child to class. Also, please remember; if you have authorized someone to pick up your child from school, they will need photo identification in order to do so.

Classroom observation schedules have been sent out and are posted in the front office. If you need to change your time, please call Kim from

8:30 – 11:30 a.m. As well, conference sign up sheets will be posted in the office on Monday. Please take a moment to sign up for a parent-teacher conference with your child’s teacher.

Lee Parsons, the Building and Grounds Chairperson, has put together a list of small (and not so small) projects that need to be done around the school. If you would like to volunteer to tackle one of these projects, please contact Lee at 563-5255.

Positive Discipline Corner **Limits**

Anyone involved in establishing limits must consider their long-range purpose: to help children learn skills and attitudes that will allow them to become happy, contributing members of society. Established limits can improve the quality of life for both children and adults. Knowing the boundaries of appropriate behavior

provides comfort and a feeling of safety. While this may be obvious to most adults, many children may interpret limits as existing only to control them. The challenge is to help children see their response to established limits as an opportunity to learn important life skills, such as self-discipline, responsibility, cooperation, social interest, and how to solve problems.

Additional benefits accrue when students are actively involved in the creation of limits. Children are likely to be enthusiastic and motivated about following limits that they helped establish. Moreover, when children participate in

setting limits, they are developing skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Next Week: Suggestions for Setting Limits with Children

Thank You

- Anne Geisler for even more painting work – it’s looking great!
- Doug Rushton for building the bottle return.
- Janesa Herndon and Shannon Hunter for helping to organize the volunteers for the bake sale.
- Teresa Hewson for reading with the children in the elementary classroom.
- Carolina Rushton for teaching Spanish.
- Katie LeBel for publishing the recent press releases.

Announcements and Dates to Remember

- Friday, November 10 – Veteran’s Day (observed) – No School
 - Monday, November 11 – Parent/Teacher Conferences – Mrs. B
 - Tuesday, November 12 – Parent/Teacher Conferences – Mr. D
 - Wednesday, November 13 – Parent/ Teacher Conferences – Ms. Casey
 - Thursday, November 14 – Parent/Teacher Conferences – Ms. Sarah
 - Wednesday, November 22 – Friday, November 24 – Thanksgiving Break
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