



Montessori Matters

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OUR AIM IS NOT ONLY TO MAKE THE CHILD UNDERSTAND, AND STILL LESS TO FORCE HIM TO MEMORIZE, BUT SO TO TOUCH HIS IMAGINATION AS TO ENTHUSE HIM TO HIS INNERMOST CORE.

~ MARIA MONTESSORI

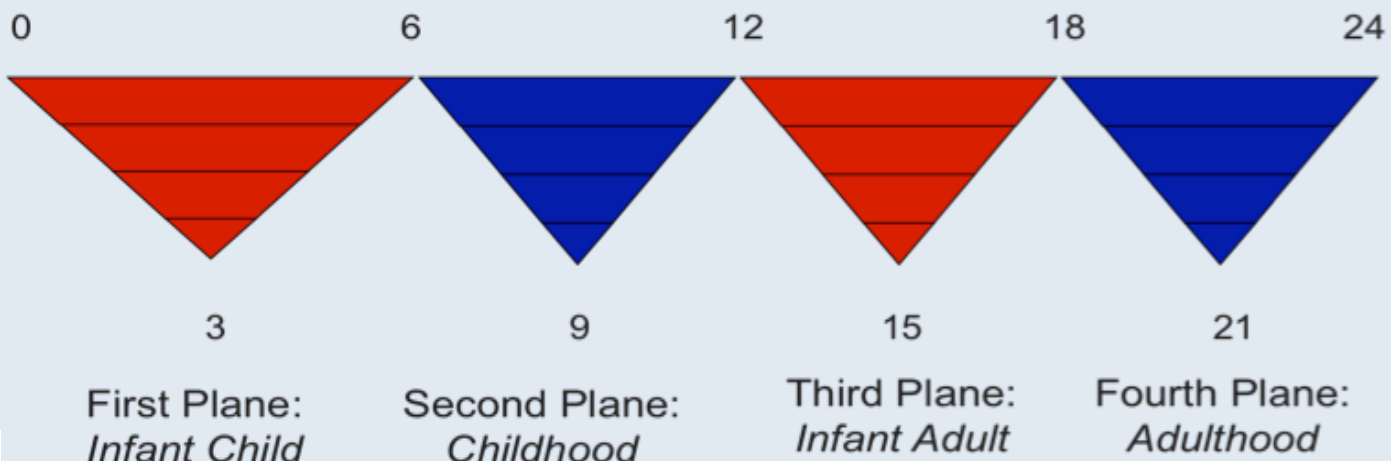
Montessori and the Imagination

Notes from Nikki

Occasionally parents will ask about the role of imaginative play and creativity in the Montessori classroom. To best understand fantasy and imaginative play, let's start first with an overview of the general stages of development children experience beginning at birth.

Dr. Montessori called these stages the *Four Planes of Development*. She observed that humans progressed through 4 distinctive periods (or "planes") of development between the ages of birth and 24 years. Each plane is divided into 6 years: the 1st plane from birth to six years; the 2nd plane from six to 12 years; the 3rd plane from 12 to 18 years; and the 4th plane from 18-24 years.

Four Planes of Development



Children in the first plane of development (birth to six years) have what Montessori coined an **absorbent mind**. They easily and effortlessly absorb or take in their surrounding. First plane children are concrete thinkers, still collecting the experiences needed to make generalizations and judgments about their environment. Therefore, stories of fantasy and make-believe can be confusing for young children and difficult to distinguish from real life. Dr. Montessori believed it was best to offer young children (under the age of 6), real experiences instead of pretend experiences. Just as we offer the child a real apple to slice for a snack (instead of a pretend kitchen area), so too should we offer him books and stories depict real-life stories and experiences. This allows children to make sense of their world and understand how things fit together. There is, however, a difference between fantasy and creativity. Creativity and creative expression is a fundamental part of the Montessori classroom at all levels. It is offered to the child through art, music, movement and (for older children) creative writing exercises. On the playground we see child-generated imaginative play as children pretend to be animals on a farm or build castles in the sandbox. Their own make-believe play offers the first glimpse of children taking previously learned information and creating something new. These observations of creativity at work are a central and real part of our work with the young child. We notice that at about the age of six, a change occurs in the thinking of the child. The once absorbent mind now

develops into a **reasoning mind**, one that is able to take the clear and concrete experiences of their early childhood and expand on them. Now is the time that fantasy, fables, myths, legends and faerie tales become an important tool for children. Second plane (6-12 years) children not only enjoy the playful and imaginative aspect of these stories, but their abstract thinking allows them to understand the underlying message or moral of the story (and there is always a moral to the story!). In turn, they themselves use their imagination and powers of abstraction to take real experiences and expand on them to the next level, imagining things that have never existed. Thus, it is our mission to support the children in their development with appropriate and enriching experiences. We know that the seeds of creativity can be tended and nurtured through a variety of experiences and the partnership between school and home.

MORNING COFFEE: Creating Responsibility through Routines

Join us on **Wednesday, November 4** as guest speaker Marjorie Vaughn leads us in a discussion on how to create routines that really work. Marjorie, an AMI Primary-trained guide and parent of two young children, will talk about how to use daily routines to promote harmony, self-esteem and independence in the home. We will meet at the Glen Castle at 8:45 a.m. and families from both campuses are encouraged to attend. Please RSVP with Nikki by **Monday, November 2**.

Upcoming Events:

- Nov 4:** Morning Coffee: *Respect and Routine* at Glen Castle campus*
8:45 – 10:00 am
- Nov 6:** Speech-Language Screenings at Poncey Highland campus
Pre-registration required
- Nov 7:** Bookbinding Workshop with Michael Goodman
9:00 am – 1:00 pm
RSVP with Michael at: meg2007@mac.com
- Nov 8:** Open House for Prospective Parents at Glen Castle campus
1:00 – 3:00 pm
- Nov 9:** Speech-Language Screenings at Glen Castle campus
Pre-registration required
- Nov 12:** Open House for Prospective Parents at Poncey Highland campus
6:30 – 8:00 pm
- Nov 24:** Grandparent & Special Friend Day *
11:30 am dismissal for all children
- Nov 25-27:** Thanksgiving Holiday – NO SCHOOL
- Dec 1:** 10,000 Villages Shopping Night*
6:00 – 8:00 pm
- Dec 18:** Winter Break Begins
12:00 pm dismissal for all children
- Dec 21 – Jan 1:** Winter Holiday – NO SCHOOL
- Jan 4:** Teacher Work Day – NO SCHOOL
- Jan 5:** School Resumes

TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES HOLIDAY SHOPPING EVENT

Montessori In Town and Ten Thousand Villages invite you to join us for our annual **MIT Shopping Night** on December 1 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Our shopping night allows you to do your holiday shopping while supporting artisans and craftspeople from around the world. Additionally, Montessori In Town receives 10% of the sales accumulated this evening directly benefiting our Scholarship and School Library funds.

Anyone is welcome to attend, so be sure to tell your friends and neighbors. We hope you will join us for another fun and profitable evening.

Ten Thousand Villages
1056 St. Charles Ave, NE
Atlanta, GA 30306
404-892-5307

GRANDPARENT AND SPECIAL FRIEND DAY

Grandparents or other honored guests are invited to join us for Montessori In Town annual **Grandparent and Special Friend Day**. On Tuesday, November 24, all children are invited bring a grandparent or other close adult in their lives to visit school.

Visitors will be received with coffee and light fare: **Poncey Highland guests will gather at 9:30 a.m.** and **Glen Castle visitors will arrive at 10:00 a.m.** There will be a meet and greet and brief welcome before guests are ushered into their grandchild's classroom to observe and visit with them.

As this is the last day before Thanksgiving holidays, **dismissal will be at 11:30 a.m.** Guests are invited to accompany the children to the playground and dismissal will be from there. It is our hope that with special friends and relatives coming to visit for the holiday, this will add to family traditions and celebrations.

Invitations have gone out for this very important day and we hope to see many of your parents and special friends at this event. Please RSVP to us by returning the bottom portion of the invitation back to school. Due to space consideration, guests are limited to 2 per child.

RRISA DRIVE TO BENEFIT NEEDEY FAMILIES

Are you looking for an excuse to clean out your closets? Starting now through the Thanksgiving holiday, MIT will participate in a clothing and household goods drive to benefit RRISA (Refugee Resettlement & Immigration Services of Atlanta). We held this drive last year and it was a great success. RRISA (www.RRISA.org) is an organization that helps refugees first arriving in this country by providing services such as a fully furnished apartment, employment training, interpreter services and youth programs. Last fiscal year, RRISA helped over 800 refugees settle in Atlanta. Refugee families come to this country with very few possessions after spending years in refugee camps. As winter approaches, the most crucial items needed are winter coats for both adults and children. Hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and book bags are also greatly needed. RRISA will also take clothes and any household item in good condition, such as sheets, blankets, pillows, picture frames, kitchen items etc.... Toys, books, and gently used stuffed animals are also accepted.

Please contact Sarah Eiler at (404) 840-4505 or e-mail her saraheiler@earthlink.net to arrange pick up of donations. All donations are tax deductible and will be put to good use!

MABEL'S LABELS FUNDRAISER

Get organized and support Montessori In Town without leaving your home! It's not too late to take advantage of MIT's "paperless" fundraiser with **Mabel's Labels**. Go to www.montessoriiintown.mabel.ca and order personalized sticky labels, bag tags and more.

MIT earns 15-20% from each order and will benefit our Scholarship Fund and School Library.

The fundraiser will continue through December 31.