



Montessori Matters

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If help and salvation are to come, they can only come from the children, for the children are the makers of men.

~ Maria Montessori

*It's all in the
way you say it...*

Notes from Nikki

We've all seen it: the neighbor, teacher, babysitter or grandparent who has the knack for getting children to listen. How do they do it? What makes some people the "child whisperer" while others struggle to get the words out (let alone achieve the desired outcome)? What appears to be magic is really just two simple skills used in tandem: 1) the ability to demonstrate respect to the child and 2) paying close attention to what we are saying so we always give the right message.

Conveying Our Respect

One of the simplest ways to show our respect to children is by *repeating back* the words they use when they are talking to us. This is particularly helpful when we have an upset, tired or emotional child on our hands. Phrases such as, "You are saying ___. I hear you and I will help you in a minute. You do not need to say it over and over anymore", can be particularly helpful in soothing a distressed child. We demonstrate that we are truly listening and engaged when we use this technique, for example: "You learned a new lesson at school today and you want to tell me about it. I am so happy that you are proud of your work."

Another way that we show our respect to children is by *honoring how they feel* at that moment. So often our instinct is to tell children why they shouldn't be sad, angry, scared (or any other negative emotion). When we acknowledge that feeling and give

it a name (particularly helpful to younger children who are building their vocabulary), we immediately validate the child and honor their feelings. “You seem really angry with your brother right now. I can see that the way he treated you in front of your friends was pretty upsetting. Let’s get a drink of water and when you calm down we can talk about some ways to prevent this from happening again.” When we *name emotions* (instead of avoiding their existence), we support children in developing their own emotional intelligence so they can recognize feeling, positive and negative, and express them appropriately. We also reinforce that acknowledging others’ feelings helps to build trust and mutual respect.

Choosing Our Words Carefully

Sometimes adults can use words that unintentionally confuse or mislead children; ironically, we tend to make this mistake most often when we are attempting to soften a “no” or avoid disappointment on the part of the child. We may phrase things in a question (“Would you like to get ready for bed now?”) in order to be polite, but when our question is answered with a “no”, we are not achieving our desired goal and send a mixed message. A more direct request, “It’s time to get ready for bed. Would you like to choose a book for me to read to you or shall we sing a song instead?”, is less confusing.

There are some “magic words” that help us set boundaries while maintaining an atmosphere of respect with our children. One such example are the words *even though*: “*Even though* you wish you could watch the end of the movie, it is your bedtime”; “*Even though* you want dessert, our family rule is that you may have it only when you’ve finished dinner”. Word pairs such as *when/then* and *either/or* can also assist when we are asking something of our child that they may not want to do. *When/then* is most effective when we want our child to do something while *either/or* works best when we want our child to stop doing something. For example: “*When* you’ve gone to the bathroom *then* we can leave for the park”; “*Either* get out of bed when I wake you *or* you’ll need to go to bed earlier.”

When we use respect and clear communication with our children they not only learn to trust that we “mean what we say and say what we mean”, but they also learn that verbal communication is an important component of safe and trusting relationships.

Montessori In Town’s Auction and Fundraiser

Tickets are on sale for MIT’s First Annual Auction and Fundraiser on Friday, May 13 at 7:00 p.m. The event will be held at Fusion Design Atlanta, 800 Miami Circle, one of Buckhead’s liveliest design and decorating scenes. For only \$50/ couple, you’ll enjoy the beautiful aesthetics of the Fusion Design gallery, over \$35K in exciting auction items, live entertainment, raffle items, live and silent auctions, fine wine provided by Murphy’s Wine Shop, premium beer donated by Bob & Kristine Sandage and great food supplied by Miller Union, Sotto Sotto/Fritti, Cameli’s and Cypress Street Pint and Plate! RSVP by purchasing your tickets at: www.montessoriintownauction.com

Camp Ladybug at Montessori In Town

Camp Ladybug, celebrating its sixth year at Montessori In Town, offers 4 weeks of nature-based outdoor fun for children ages 3 to 7 years. Camp hours are 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and will be offered the weeks of June 6, June 13, July 11 and July 18. Cost per session is \$160.00.

Camp Ladybug uses the broader framework of the Montessori program offered during the school year; children are guided children in experiential learning in a respectful, nurturing atmosphere. While Montessori in its approach, all children are invited to join in the summer-time fun.

Each of the 4 sessions will offer a distinctive theme and include: simple science demonstrations and experiments, nature discoveries, theme-based arts and crafts, group games, twice-weekly water play, songs & creative movement. Each day ends with a brown bag picnic-style lunch. Themes for this year's Camp Ladybug are: Session 1 (week of June 6) "Pond Life"; Session 2 (week of June 13) "Up in the Air"; Session 3 (week of July 11) "Turtles"; Session 4 (week of July 18) "We Dig (under) the Earth".

Please contact camp coordinator, Libby Warfield, with any questions regarding Camp Ladybug: 404-452-6047 or libby@montessoriantown.com. To download a registration form, please visit the school website: www.montessoriantown.com

READ TO ME

Read it LOUD! is a national early literacy outreach campaign raising awareness about the profound positive impact that reading aloud has on children, their success in school and in life. The program is a collaboration of the Library of Congress' Center for the Book, the Read it LOUD! Foundation and an extraordinary coalition of public and private sector companies, affinity and community-based groups, literacy and early childhood development experts, and caring individuals.

As a parent or other member of the educational community, you can join the campaign by signing The Promise on the Read it LOUD! website. The Promise is your commitment to make a difference in your child's life by reading to him or her for just 10 minutes a day. Your reading aloud to your child will help build a strong foundation for language, learning and a promising future.

Join millions of parents and caregivers across America who have already joined the movement and sign The Promise at www.readitloud.org today!

TOP 10 REASONS TO READ IT LOUD!

- 1 Improves listening comprehension
- 2 Increases attention span
- 3 Stimulates the imagination
- 4 Lays the foundation for learning
- 5 Builds vocabulary
- 6 Improves language skills and grammar
- 7 Develops cognitive and critical thinking skills
- 8 Develops a positive attitude toward reading
- 9 Creates a life-long bond with the reader
- 10 It's fun for both parent and child!

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS SPRING-SUMMER 2011

May 13:	MIT First Annual Fundraiser	7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.
May 27:	Last Day of School; Early Dismissal for All Children	12:00 noon
June 6-10:	Camp Ladybug Session 1 at Glen Castle	9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
June 13-17:	Camp Ladybug Session 2 at Glen Castle	9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
July 11-15:	Camp Ladybug Session 3 at Poncey Highland	9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
July 18-22:	Camp Ladybug Session 4 at Poncey Highland	9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Aug. 18-19:	Orientation Days for New Student - Primary	9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
	Orientation Days for New Student – Elementary	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Aug. 22-26:	Early Dismissal for Returning Primary Students	8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Aug. 22-24:	Early Dismissal for Elementary Students	8:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Aug. 25-26:	Regular Schedule for Elementary Students	8:15 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Aug. 29:	Regular Schedule for Half-Day Primary Students	8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
	Regular Schedule for Full-Day Primary Students	8:30 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.