



Montessori Matters

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[L]anguage is a kind of wall which encloses a given human company, and separates it from all others. And this, perhaps, is why 'the word' has always had a mystical value for man's mind; it is something that unites men even more closely than nationality. Words are bonds between men, and the language they use develops and ramifies according to the needs of their minds. Language, we may say, grows with human thought. - Maria Montessori

A Parent's Guide to Reading and Enjoying Books with Young Children

The faculty and staff at MIT thank you for your support of our recent book fair in conjunction with Charis Books. This annual event not raises funds for MIT's scholarship fund, but more importantly promotes the love of literature in our homes and classrooms. With this in mind MIT Primary Guide, Anne Ursery, shares her thoughts on reading with the young child.

There is something you can consistently do with your child that will reassure, inform and explain, entertain, incite curiosity and inspire. Reading with a young child is one of the best ways to experience quality time together. Building rituals and routines around books allows the time to cuddle and calm the child. Additionally, reading is the first step toward the child reading on his or her own.

It is important to read to children for the same reasons that it is important to talk with them: children are hungry for words and language.

When is a good time to begin to read to children?

It is best to begin reading to children at the same time that we begin to speak to them. In regards to the child's development of language, Dr. Montessori tells us in *The Absorbent Mind*, "...[the child] is aware of being in a world of things, and now each of these is indicated by a special word." She also states that these children should, "...frequently hear the best speech clearly pronounced."

Children should be read to at least twice a day, every day. Many of us read books at bedtime and this is a lovely ritual to create for the child. Yet, we want to leave the child with the impression that there are **other times of the day** that are appropriate and enjoyable times for reading. There are various moments through the day when it is valuable to model taking advantage of the opportunity to read. This could happen when one feels in the mood to read a book or when time presents itself. When a child is read to, she is learning and perfecting the skill of listening. Often times, one will find through reading aloud to a child what he or she is intrigued by and loves.

When it comes to choosing books it is important to use care and keep the child in mind. When children are young they are interested in information about real life: farm or wild animals; stories about what people do for work and play; stories about nature and the seasons; about cars, airplanes and trains. Children are trying to make sense of their world and sharing real information helps them with this work. This will spur many questions and observations from your child and allow for much conversation and sharing of language.

Additionally, the illustrations in the books we choose are important to consider. They serve as the visual narrative and tell the story along with the words the adult is reading. Pictures can be created by many techniques and are an introduction to art and the appreciation of beauty. Children love to look at beautiful images, drawings, photographs, and so on. Similarly, lovely illustrations can serve as inspiration for future artistic endeavors and for rich conversation.

What Kinds of Books Should We Choose?

Here are a few themes or categories as suggestions:

Books about family life: Young children love to hear about things they are familiar with, such as sibling relationships, daily activities and home life.

Books that entertain: one way to ensure the child will be entertained with books is for the parent to choose books he/she will enjoy reading. Be sure the storyline is meaningful to you, that the language is “catchy”, not boring or tiring. This is especially helpful when we recognize that children often love to hear the same story read again and again.

Stories with life lessons: These stories teach us something about life around us. They allow us to “walk off the pages and into real life” without being preachy or overdone.

Books with language that has special rhyme, rhythm and poetry: The language that is used in these books is different from the everyday language we hear in our home. These books contain phrases that are imaginative, eloquent and express beauty of thought.

Books that allow children to experience different cultures: These are books that allow us to observe and gain more insight on the traits that humans share that show our sameness, though often expressed in different ways.

Books that allow children to experience nature: Books bring the world of the outdoors alive for children. These books link the child to nature and to the life being lived around us.

When we choose books for children, so often it is from a memory we may have of a favorite book from our own childhood. We also receive and give books as gifts for the same reasons. As adults, we have a special connection with books and reading and we often feel excited to pass on a love of learning to the children in our lives. Children are hungry for words. Reading with children allows us to enrich their language and their lives through books.

FOR SMALL HANDS GROUP ORDER

The teachers at Montessori In Town rely on the *Montessori Services* classroom catalog as a source for the many child-sized tools and supplemental activities in the classroom environment. *Montessori Services* also offers an at-home catalogue for families called *For Small Hands*. Each year we participate in the *For Small Hands* fundraiser; families benefit from free shipping and our school earns 15% of your order in credit to be used for classroom supplies and equipment.

Your order will be shipped to the school and in-stock items are ready for distributed before the winter holidays.

The deadline for FREE group shipping is Tuesday, October 18th.

Yoga at Druid Hills Baptist Church

Looking to renew yourself? *Yoga Bridge* offers workshops and individual classes at the Selah Center located in the Druid Hills Baptist Church. MIT families might be particularly interested in their morning classes held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30-9:45 a.m. Evening and weekend classes and series are also offered.

For more information contact Tiffany Morgan at tiffmorgan@bellsouth.net or stop by MIT's lobby to pick up a flyer.

FALL EVENTS AT MONTESSORI IN TOWN

OCT. 3-25: PARENT CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS SIGN UP NOW ON SCHOOLICITY UNDER "APPOINTMENTS"

OCT. 11: INDIVIDUAL PHOTOS – ANNE'S CLASS

OCT. 12: INDIVIDUAL PHOTOS – CLARISSA & MAUREEN'S CLASS

OCT. 13: INDIVIDUAL PHOTOS – JEANIE'S CLASS AND LEAH'S CLASS

OCT. 14: PRIMARY HALF DAY 12:00 NOON – EARLY DISMISSAL FOR ALL PRIMARY CHILDREN

OCT. 15: OUTDOOR PARENT WORK DAY 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

OCT. 26: INTERNATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION

PRIMARY & ELEMENTARY EARLY DISMISSAL 12:00 NOON DISMISSAL FOR ALL PRIMARY AND ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES BEGIN SIGN UP SOON ON SCHOOLICITY UNDER "APPOINTMENTS"

OCT. 27-28: PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES NO SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

WEEK OF OCT. 31: SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING SCREENINGS SPECIFIC DATES TBA

NOV 1, 8 AND 15: ACTIVE PARENTING SERIES 8:45-11:00 AM IN THE MEETING ROOM

NOV. 10: WHAT IS ELEMENTARY? PARENT EDUCATION FOR PRIMARY PARENTS 6:30-8:00 PM IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

NOV. 11: PRIMARY EARLY DISMISSAL 12:00 NOON DISMISSAL FOR ALL PRIMARY CHILDREN

NOV. 22: GRANDPARENT & SPECIAL FRIEND DAY

PRIMARY & ELEMENTARY EARLY DISMISSAL 11:30 AM DISMISSAL FOR ALL PRIMARY AND ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

NOV. 23-25: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY NO SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

You are Getting Very Sleepy...

As we all readjust to the fall school schedule (not to mention the start of Daylights Savings) the same question arises: how much sleep do children really need each night? A recent *New York Times* article set out to answer just that. According to the National Sleep Foundation the following guidelines are as follows: newborns need 12-18 hours; toddlers (1-3 years) 12-14 hours; young children (3-5 years) 11-13 hours; and 10-11 hours for older children (5-10 years). Sleep studies show that

teens require 8 ½ - 9 ¼ hours nightly to function at their best. It is no surprise that over 90% of teens don't get that much and 10% report sleeping less than 6 hours nightly.

So what can parents do? Try to keep bed (and wakeup) times set, even during breaks from school. Sticking to soothing pre-bed rituals (bath, book and cuddle time) and limiting stimulating electronics in the early evening hours can help children get to sleep more easily.