



# The Montessori OBSERVER

Montessori Elementary Education

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## Creating an IMS Teacher Training Center

IMS is now receiving inquiries about establishment and operation of IMS teacher training centers in various locations throughout North America. The unique IMS affiliation program supports the development and successful operation of training centers by providing IMS primary and elementary course curriculum guides, recognition, certification and other support services under terms and conditions specified in a written affiliation agreement. An IMS training center in your area is the essential basis for assuring a dependable source of qualified Montessori teachers to meet the continuing and growing need of the local Montessori community.

Interested individuals and groups are invited to apply to establish an IMS training center in areas not presently served by IMS affiliates. Complete the Reader Response form for further details and an application.

## Montessori Observer Eight Issues Per Year

Montessori schools in North America and IMS members throughout the world will now receive the *Montessori Observer* eight times each year. The *Observer* will be sent during the following months: Jan., Feb., March, April, May, Sept., Oct., and Nov.

This frequent mailing schedule will enable IMS to keep the Montessori community currently advised with respect to the latest events and the rapid development of Montessori education throughout the world.



*Blanche Altshuler, Kodaly music instructor of IMS elementary teacher training course (and child).*

## Kodaly Music Featured

A special feature of the 1980-81 IMS elementary training program is a Kodaly music component conducted by **Blanche Altshuler**.

The Kodaly approach developed, like the Montessori method in the early 1900's, from observation of the natural tendencies and development of young children. Since this approach is consistent with cosmic education and Montessori principles, the materials and lessons of the Kodaly method provide a basic guidance and support for the presentation of music in the Montessori elementary environment.

The Kodaly approach is a result of the research of Zoltan Kodaly, a Hungarian music educator and composer, who sought a means of music instruction to enable all children to acquire a basic music literacy. Kodaly's research revealed certain tonal patterns and relationships common to simple folk songs and chants of children throughout the world. Kodaly's elaboration and development of this common natural music knowledge has gradually come to be recognized as the *Kodaly method*.

*cont'd page 3, col. 2*

## IMS Elementary Course Workshop Announced Aug. 4-22, 1980

The materials workshop of the IMS elementary teacher training course has been set for Aug. 4-Aug. 22, 1980 in Renton, WA.

After completion of independent study in Montessori principles and cosmic education for children 6-12, students attend a three-week materials workshop in Renton, WA. This workshop provides classroom instruction in intensive, full-day sessions presenting the complete range of Montessori elementary curriculum areas including math, language, cultural subjects and music.

IMS/Washington State, the course sponsor, will conduct the workshop at the Montessori Manor School in Renton, WA, a nearby suburb of Seattle. The Manor school is located in a scenic wooded setting near river and mountains.

The faculty includes: **Joh Laven** (director, IMS/San Antonio), cultural subjects; **Mary Ruth** (director, IMS/Washington State), language; **Dr. R.A.L. Wentworth** (London, England), math; **Blanche Altshuler** (Baltimore, MD), music. Also participating on the faculty are **Lee Havis** (director, IMS/Washington, D.C.) and **Margaret Green** (director, IMS/Alaska).

Since enrollment in the course is limited, it is recommended that interested individuals contact IMS now. Complete the Reader Response form for further details and an application.

Look for the  
*April Observer*  
featuring  
**Montessori Organizations**



# EDITORIAL

## **The Benefits of Cosmic Education**

Cosmic education is not a curriculum guide limited only to the Montessori elementary classroom. In fact, cosmic education is necessary for the realization of the complete effectiveness of Montessori principles at all levels of education. The cosmic approach, relating all events and circumstances to the total functioning of the universe, enables the child to consciously adapt to its environment; i.e., to realize its normalized nature.

The Montessori primary teacher, without a recognition of cosmic principles, is limited in her ability to communicate effectively with the older children of the classroom and she cannot adequately engage children who are bored and uninterested in the conventional Montessori apparatus. Montessori teachers, through knowledge and application of cosmic education, have a considerably enlarged ability to arouse interest in children and support the child's adaption to its time, place and group.

### **Our Traditional Past**

Attitudes and beliefs from childhood experiences in traditional schools in which subject areas were separated from each other, limit the adult's ability to express a new approach to children based on the interrelation of knowledge. Teachers often unconsciously avoid certain subject areas out of fear and communicate this fear to children in the classroom. Teachers must be courageous in extending themselves beyond their limiting attitudes and beliefs of childhood if the cosmic approach is to be effective in the classroom.

### **"Modern" Education**

Although modern public education seeks to individualize instruction and provide opportunities to learn out of interest, curriculum needs tend to determine the limits

to which interest and freedom can be tolerated in the classroom. The overriding concern for "basic skills" curtails a child's chosen projects in favor of a required reading or math assignment. The imposition of certain curriculum requirements restrict individual liberty and deter the child's experience of satisfaction and joy resulting from exploration and discovery out of personal interest. Required subject matter cannot be made interesting if the child is not interested.

### **Montessori Commitment**

The Montessori commitment to the child's interest is not compromised by a predetermined "curriculum". Cosmic education and application of Montessori principles enable children to pursue complete satisfaction of their natural interest. Basic skills are included in the classroom as supportive "tools" of learning to enhance the child's research and further study into areas of interest. The teacher is assured that all aspects of the curriculum are included as she guides the learning process through the cosmic approach.

### **The Cosmic Approach**

Cosmic education, the total interrelated functioning of the universe, transforms communication and knowledge into a process of ordering the mind and acquiring new knowledge based on the child's interest. As the child studies how life is supported by its environment and how all elements of the universe are connected and aligned in purpose, any interest can eventually lead to enhanced ability in basic skills and other diverse curriculum areas. Children naturally desire to improve their basic skills of language and math as they realize their connection and contribution to the cosmic whole.

The primary benefits of the cosmic approach is not refinement of basic academic skills, but rather the development of a sense of confidence about confronting new problems and achieving joy and satisfaction through living in the immediate circumstances. The ability to realize the perfection of the moment, regardless of circumstances, is discovered by the child through cosmic education. This conscious adaption to time, place and group is the purpose of the Montessori elementary classroom. At the primary level, this adaption is achieved unconsciously (normalization).

### **The Child's Interest**

Allowing the child's interest to complete and resolve itself is the learning process of the Montessori classroom. This process leads to a realization of the child's adaption to its time, place and group. The teacher's knowledge and application of the cosmic approach assures that the child's interests follow a productive and worthwhile path of development. In addition, the teacher must support and encourage the completion of projects begun by children to assure successful results.

### **The Montessori Observer**

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Lee Havis, Executive Director

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#### **INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY**

The International Montessori Society is sponsored by Educational Services, Inc., a non-profit corporation organized in Maryland, U.S.A. The purpose of IMS is to support the effective application of Montessori principles throughout the world.

#### **SUBSCRIPTION**

*The Montessori Observer* is provided at no cost to Montessori schools in North America. Subscription to this publication may be obtained by requesting IMS membership which is open to all individuals for a \$10 yearly fee. Complete the membership application form to obtain an individual subscription and other benefits of IMS membership.

#### **ADVERTISING**

Advertising space is available for services and products relating to Montessori education. Marketplace ads are \$7/line. Position and Placement ads are \$10 each and will be set and edited by us to conform to space requirements. Write for our advertising outline for rates and other information about design advertising.

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## The Correct Use of Materials

The use of didactic apparatus in the Montessori classroom has often been the source of considerable concern, controversy and confusion within the Montessori community. Although the extraordinary benefits derived by young children through manipulation of these specially designed materials has been repeatedly demonstrated, the *correct use of materials* remains a lively debate among teachers, e.g., Must materials be presented only according to the steps demonstrated in the Montessori teacher training program manual? Must children be permitted to use only those apparatus first presented by the teacher? To what extent, if any, is imagination and fantasy permitted with materials? What is the source of the *correct use of materials*?—the child? the teacher? the materials themselves?

### To Examine the Issue

We do not begin an examination of the *correct use of materials* at the beginning since teachers are engaged in the issue of materials somewhere in the middle. Confusion, uncertainty, insight, inspiration and amazement are common daily experiences of teachers with respect to the use of materials by children in the classroom. A great mass of attitudes, judgments and opinions about the use of Montessori materials deters each teacher's ability to clearly observe the child/environment engagement in the classroom. Therefore, the source of the *correct use of materials* remains obscured.

### Source: The Child

Clear observation of the child/environment engagement would ultimately reveal that the child itself is the source of the correct use of materials. The child's interest is the first observable point of contact to which the teacher must direct her attention. Although the source of interest within the child is essentially a mystery, the emergence of this interest which

eventually leads to normalization requires the right conditions as defined by the Montessori environment.

### The Role of the Teacher

The teacher's function is fundamentally to create the right conditions to enable the child to discover and manifest its interest. The right conditions are realized as a result of the teacher's commitment to Montessori principles in the classroom. Therefore, the teacher serves an essential purpose in enabling children to discover interest and achieve normalization.

### The Correct Use of Materials

The *correct use of materials* is determined by the child's interest which naturally emerges from the right conditions of a Montessori environment. The teacher's commitment to preparation of the environment with regard to care, respect and order is one of the essential principles which assure the establishment of the conditions needed for children to discover interest leading to normalization. Ultimately, the perfectionment and refinement of the application of Montessori principles will enable teachers to resolve confusion and uncertainty associated with the issue of the *correct use of materials*.

### Kodaly Music

*cont'd from page 1, col. 2*

International awareness of the *Kodaly method* began in Vienna in 1958. In the 1960's, Kodaly music principles were employed in schools in North America and today the Kodaly approach represents a significant trend in the field of music education at the elementary level in many schools.

For further information about Kodaly music, contact: Kodaly Center of America, 1326 Washington St., West Newton, MA 02125.

## IMS Training Centers

**Alaska, Anchorage**  
Montessori Creative Training Center  
Margaret Green, Director  
2601 Fairbanks St.  
Anchorage, AL 99503  
(905) 272-5033

**Texas, San Antonio**  
Kriterion Montessori Teacher Center  
Joh Laven, Director  
611 West Ashby Place  
San Antonio, TX 78212  
(512) 735-9778

**Washington, Renton**  
IMS/Washington State  
Mary Ruth, Director  
P.O. Box 2019  
Renton, WA 98055  
(206) 266-9666

**Washington, D.C.**  
IMS/Washington, D.C.  
Lee Havis, Director  
P.O. Box 4338  
Washington, D.C. 20012  
(301) 589-1127

## Freedom...

Children who are free will behave in a disciplined orderly way; i.e., children allowed to be as they are will manifest their true intention to contribute to others and develop themselves responsibly.

Allowing freedom to children is not abandoning or neglecting them. They require support from the environment; i.e., the teacher, the other children, the physical environment. The right precise conditions must be provided with sufficient depth and clarity for a sufficient time to enable normalization to occur spontaneously and continuously.

*Apply for*

## IMS Montessori School Membership

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**BONUS!** If application sent by **April 1, 1980**, you receive a free copy of *The Essential Montessori* by Elizabeth Hainstock.

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