



The Montessori OBSERVER

Justice

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Illinois Regulations Hostile to Montessori

On August 15, 1983, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services adopted new requirements for licensing of Day Care Centers which could detrimentally affect many Montessori schools in the state. The International Montessori Society has already expressed its concern regarding certain recent developments in that state affecting the regulation of Montessori schools. See *Observer*, Vol. II, No. 4 (April, 1981); Vol. II, No. 7 (Oct. 1981).

In brief, the new licensing requirements, applicable to Montessori schools which are defined as a "day care center," seek to impose an extensive, rigid set of provisions which ultimately threaten to deter the effective application of Montessori principles.

For example, the new Illinois requirements provide no "waiver" from the enforcement of such provisions as: (1) specific classroom materials to establish a "pretend area," including "six small durable transportation toys per every 20 children for block area" and "dress-up clothes" (Section 407.22; Appendix C); (2) rigid staff/child ratios such as one adult for every eight children in the 2 - 5 mixed-age group (Section 407.23); (3) maximum group size of

16 for 2 - 5 mixed-age group (Section 407.23); (4) minimum indoor floor space of 35 square feet per child (Section 407.31(b)).

Notably, Section 407.11(5) and 407.12(f) recognize "completion of a teacher training program" accredited by two specific private "Montessori" organizations as an alternative to otherwise applicable staff training requirements. Significantly, such provision fails to recognize teacher training offered by the International Montessori Society in such preferential alternative. IMS has opposed such prejudicial discrimination in this provision by sending specific written comments to the Department of Children and Family Services.

IMS has consistently favored a "waiver" provision from such detrimental day care requirements as noted here where such a "waiver" is "not contrary to the public interest." Unless such a

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Standards for Montessori Schools

Since government day care licensing requirements can readily deter, frustrate or burden the effective application of Montessori principles, a "waiver" or "exception" from certain requirements is often necessary for Montessori schools. Rigid staff-child ratios, minimum space requirements, group size/age regulations and burdensome teacher qualifications are among those specific provisions which may be adversely applied to Montessori schools.

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The Collective Subconscious

"... a kind of 'subconscious organization of defense' is achieved by all parents in the world. All lean upon each other. The whole of society forms a collective subconscious wherein all act in complete agreement when they remove and suppress the child."

Maria Montessori
from *The Formation of Man*,
1955 ed., p. 68



Child working with the "pink tower" at the Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana (Champaign, Illinois)

Montessori in Champaign-Urbana

The Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana, IMS member school in Champaign, Illinois, was founded twenty years ago as an outgrowth of a parent study group. The school, a not-for-profit organization, is owned and operated by the Montessori Society of Champaign-Urbana; and it is governed by a parent board of directors.

The school has an enrollment of fifty-four children and an eleven member staff. It offers preprimary classes (2½ - 6 yrs.), an extended-day kindergarten program, full day care and after-school care.

Special features of the Day Care Program include cooking, arts and crafts, field trips, music and movement activities and special interest lessons.

In addition to the Montessori classes and the Day Care program, the school offers violin lessons through an arrangement with the National Academy of Arts in Champaign.

The Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana is open year-round with a nine month school year program and an eleven week summer session. The school serves as a model of Montessori education in the community. Workshops are given annually by Rita Young (Directress/Administrator) for education classes from the University of Illinois and from Parkland Community College. Students from both these institutions and other

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IMS Independent Study

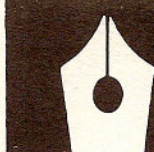
A Vital Inner Preparation

"The first thing required of a teacher is that he be rightly disposed to his task . . . a teacher must prepare himself interiorly."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 149

All IMS Montessori teacher training begins with one's own inner preparation. Dr. Montessori recognized that such "inner preparation" is a vital first imperative for the individual seeking to follow her approach . . . "rather than by being excessively preoccupied with a 'child's tendencies' (or) with the manner of 'correcting a child's mistakes.'" (Maria Montessori, *Secret of Childhood*, p. 149.)

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Justice

"justice . . . tries to ensure that every child shall make the best of himself. Justice here is to give every human being the help he needs to bring about his fullest spiritual stature."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 285

True justice - "to give every human being the help he needs" - appears in clear contrast to society's tyrannical impositions of authority and control over the young child. Within such oppressive tyranny from parents and schools, the young child readily comes to adopt a pattern of "obedience admitting neither of reason nor of justice (which) prepares man to be docile to blind forces" (Maria Montessori, *Peace and Education* (1943), p. 23). Such blind obedience to external authority is generally reflected subconsciously through what has come to represent the notion of "justice" in adult society.

"Justice" in Society

"In schools and society, and in democratic countries, justice often means only that there is a single law for all; for the rich and powerful and for those dying of hunger."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 284

Society's notion of "justice" generally forms around the principle of a single law for all. Dr. Montessori observed that such "equality for all," applied to the young child, is "purely external (and) destroys the inborn natural sense of true justice" (Maria Montessori, *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 12 - 13). Such "purely external" justice is clearly evident in the traditional teacher's enforcement of "classroom rules."

Classroom Rules

Well-meaning, yet ineffectual teachers unconsciously impose society's notion of "justice" on the young child through such controls as "classroom rules"; e.g., "no running inside"; "no shouting"; "no loud voices inside"; "no hitting"; etc. Imposition of such external rules over the young child is contrary to the effective application of Montessori principles, and tends to deter the child's attention from its own "interior teacher" towards an entangling struggle with the teacher's "personality"; i.e., values, beliefs, opinions, judgments, behaviors, etc. The young child, seeking to adhere to external "classroom rules" imposed by the teacher, is unable to

discover and express its own inner sense of true justice - - a spontaneous expression of the child's "true nature."

The Source of True Justice

"The sense of justice, so often missing in man, is found during the development of the young child. It is the failure to recognize this fact that engenders a false idea of justice."

Maria Montessori
from *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 12

The young child's "absorbent mind" readily acquires from its environment an inherent "understanding of the relationship between one's acts and the needs of others" (Id., p. 12). The adult's gentle non-judgmental approach to the young child assures that such a sense of true justice is born and nurtured specifically from an interior education - - i.e., not from the "equality of all" notion of external controls such as "classroom rules."

Creating Justice

To effectively reflect a non-judgmental approach with the young child requires the adult's considerable inner preparation and examination with regard to the notion of "justice" in one's own life. Montessori education clearly teaches that the child's "true nature" follows insuperable interior laws of development - not allegiance to rules and controls imposed by adult society.

The adult's forbearance from imposition of external controls such as "classroom rules," is the creative source of true justice in the young child. Dr. Montessori envisioned such a true justice as "the basis on which society will be organized in the future." (Maria Montessori, *Absorbent Mind*, p. 285)

Illinois Regulations

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"waiver" provision is established and properly enforced, Montessori schools may continue to face considerable hostility from governmental enforcement of licensing requirements which oppose those schools seeking faithfully to implement an educational approach to the young child as taught and practiced by Dr. Montessori.

Comments regarding these new licensing requirements may be directed to: **Mr. Gregory Coler**, Department of Children and Family Services, One North Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

Standards

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 2

The work and experience of Dr. Montessori provides an ample and clear basis for waiver from detrimental regulations and for the establishment of legitimate standards for genuine Montessori schools.

Group Size: Staff-Child Ratios

The original "Children's House" was established with "a room, provisions for one supervising adult and fifty wild children ranging in age from 2 to 6." (Rita Kramer, *Maria Montessori* (1976), p. 111).

In time, Dr. Montessori came to recognize the particular educational value of such a large number of children in a single environment.

"When classes are fairly big, differences of character show themselves more clearly, and wider experience can be gained. With small classes, this is less easy."

Absorbent Mind, p. 225

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Look for the
January Observer
featuring
Love

The Montessori Observer

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Lee Havis, Executive Director

The Montessori Observer is mailed eight times each year to IMS members throughout the world. The *Observer* is sent during the following months: Jan., Feb., March, April, May, Sept., Oct., and Nov. The purpose of this publication is to provide news and information about the development of Montessori education to extend awareness of Montessori principles and promote harmony within the Montessori community.

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.

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Nov. 1, 1983

Dear IMS,

It is my understanding that IMS lobbies to maintain Montessori schools exempt from pre-school licensing requirements. As my son is in a Montessori school, I would be very interested to know the basis for this exemption, and also whether or not IMS has its own alternative standards for safety/hygiene in the Montessori school.

With thanks,

Joan Mitchell
Rochester, MN

Ed. Note: *Minnesota employs a "Non-public Preschool Exemption" procedure which may enable some Montessori schools to avoid compliance with detrimental provisions otherwise required to obtain a license to operate. See also article entitled Standards for Montessori Schools," Page 1, Col. 2.*

Nov. 1, 1983

Hello,

I'm interested in any information concerning the differences between International Montessori teaching and regular Montessori teaching. I am planning on registering for teacher training and would find this information important.

Thank you,

Anne Berry
Oak Park, MI

Ed. Note: *"Differences" between IMS Montessori teacher training and other "Montessori" certificate programs must ultimately be judged by the observer. IMS views such "differences" as invariably implicating the issue "What is 'Montessori'?" IMS answers this fundamental question in its publication entitled "Montessori . . . Creating the New Education." In brief, IMS Montessori teaching is the effective application of Montessori principles with children. See also article entitled "Beware of the 'Montessori' Certificate", this page, Col. 2.*

Oct. 20, 1983

To IMS:

We are concerned about the new Illinois Day Care Licensing Standards which stipulate that AMS and AMI Montessori training will be acceptable substitutes for required courses in child care and/or child development (Section 407.12f).

Rita Young
Champaign, IL

Ed. Note: *IMS has communicated its opposition to such stipulation to the Illinois State Department of Children and Family Services (Springfield, IL). See article entitled "Illinois Regulations Hostile to Montessori", Page 1, Col. 1.*

THE VOID OF OPPRESSION

"It is foolish to hope or even to imagine that theoretical reforms or individual efforts could fill so great a void as that which has been made in the world through the oppression of children."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 207

Beware of the "Montessori" Certificate

The International Montessori Society is not the only organization which offers a "Montessori" teacher certificate. Since 1967, many diverse organizations and teacher training institutions have freely employed the "Montessori" label in their title - - issuing their own brand of "Montessori" certificate.¹

Since there is presently no single comprehensive accrediting agency to set uniform minimum standards or to otherwise qualify institutions issuing a "Montessori" certificate, possession of such a certificate does not necessarily even assure a minimal level of course work or subject matter completion; much less does such a "Montessori" certificate necessarily assure one's ability to effectively apply Montessori principles as reflected by the true commitment and work of Dr. Maria Montessori.

Notably, a "Montessori" certificate issued by any organization other than the International Montessori Society does not necessarily have any more association with the effective application of Montessori principles than the mere use of the term "Montessori."

The International Montessori Society assures the student enrolled in its teacher certification programs and related courses of a communication completely committed to the three fundamental Montessori principles: (1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment." Such a communication expresses the entire essential basis and preparation for enabling the individual to realize the child's true "normalized" nature as revealed by Dr. Montessori.

The "Montessori" certificate of the International Montessori Society is issued only upon completion of a substantial program of preparation for effective Montessori teaching with children. The IMS "Montessori" teacher certificate acknowledges one's practical ability to express a complete commitment to Montessori principles with children - - independent of all external forces and circumstances.

The International Montessori Society does not endorse, recommend or otherwise approve of any "Montessori" certificate issued or program offered by any organization or institution other than the International Montessori Society for the purpose of preparation for Montessori teaching or the effective application of Montessori principles.

¹ In *American Montessori Society, Inc. v. Association Montessori Internationale*, 155 U.S.P.Q. 591, 592 (1967), the U.S. Patent and Trademark Trial and Appeal Board refused to grant exclusive use of the term "Montessori" to one particular "Montessori" organization since "the term 'Montessori' has a generic and/or descriptive significance."

Positions & Placements

POSITION:

Montessori Teacher: Desires position in U.S.A. Received Montessori diploma in 1979 from Good Shepard Maria Montessori Training Centre (Columbo 7, Sri Lanka). Three years Montessori teaching experience at Montessori House of Children, St. Lawrence Convent (Columbo, Sri Lanka). References from Rev. Mother Joan Bosco (Good Shepard Training Centre). Contact: **Subajothy Rajakumar**, 115 Bolivar St., Staten Island, NY 10314, Telephone: (212) 698-4563.

Standards

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Age Level/Composition

"... two-year old children are being admitted to our schools, while parents request admission for those one and a half years."

The Formation of Man (1955), p. 5

"To separate children by age level is one of the crudest and most inhumane things one can do . . . Our schools show that little children of different ages help one another."

Absorbent Mind, p. 226

Teacher Qualifications

"The mistress of the first Children's House was . . . a woman with only a small amount of education . . . She had no ideas about teaching . . . These circumstances proved to be a necessary condition. They created a neutral atmosphere as far as any educational influence was concerned."

Discovery of the Child, p. 38

Minimum Space

"... space will be sufficient if it permits free movement among the furniture . . . a good half of the floor space in a room is unencumbered; this seems to offer us the agreeable possibility of moving about freely."

Spontaneous Activity in Education, p. 144

Minimum space requirements imposed on Montessori schools often far exceed even those generally accepted standards for fire-safety applicable to other educational institutions. See *Betty-June School v. Young*, 201 N.Y.S. 2d 692, 698 (1960) ("1 person per 20 square feet of net area is an acceptable standard").

Montessori School "Waiver"

In general, the International Montessori Society supports standards for Montessori schools which follow the practice and experience of Dr. Montessori; e.g., as reflected by the above comments. To employ such practices, a Montessori school would normally violate day care licensing requirements unless a "waiver" or "exception" can be obtained. IMS has urged government regulatory agencies to institute a "waiver" provision for Montessori schools

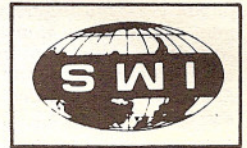
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The Montessori



Montessori in Champaign

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schools in the area fulfill class requirements for observations at the Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana.

Parent involvement plays a major role in the on-going operation of the school. Parents are involved in the upkeep and improvement of the school building and grounds, in materials making, in fund raising, and in sharing their talents and expertise in various areas. This year's annual rummage sale earned over \$5,000 for the school.

A very popular parent education medium is an annual Parents' Day, on a Saturday afternoon in early Spring, when children bring their parents to school to show them their favorite activities in the Montessori environment. Refreshments are prepared in advance by the children in the Day Care Program.

A family potluck picnic early in the fall provides an opportunity for families to get acquainted at the beginning of the school year.

Because of an extensive waiting list for its pre-primary classes and a desire among parents to extend their children's Montessori education into the elementary years, the Board of Directors is examining ways and means to expand the school.

For further information about this IMS Montessori school member, contact: Rita Young, Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana, 1112 Broadmoor Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61820, Telephone: (217) 356-1818.

Reminder

To make sure that you keep receiving your Montessori Observer newsletter, please renew your membership subscription promptly. The expiration date of your membership should be clearly visible on the mailing label.

Announcements

The Montessori Teachers' Association of Pennsylvania (MTA-PA) will present a music seminar on Saturday, Feb. 11, 1984, 9 a.m. - 12 noon, at the Whitmarsh Children's House, 6024 Butler Park, Blue Bell, PA 19422. The seminar will be conducted by **Judy Sheard**, an instructor at Suzuki Institutes and workshops throughout North Africa. For further information, contact: Nona Melnick, Pres., MTA-PA, Telephone: (215) 635-6425.

Organization of American Kodaly Educators (OAKE) will hold its 1984 conference in New Orleans, LA, on April 5 - 8, 1984. Numerous conference sessions are scheduled on topics concerning Kodaly music education. For further information, contact: Amy Huggins, 33 Elinor Ave., Baltimore, MD 21236.

Standards

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 3

where none such provision already exists "to the extent that such waiver, exemption or condition is not contrary to the public interest."

IMS Standards

The International Montessori Society offers its own Montessori school members with assistance and support as specific issues arise with regard to government regulation in the operation of their educational programs. Such assistance is provided to IMS member schools based on their expressed acknowledgement and identification with Montessori principles as set forth in IMS standards for participation in its Montessori school membership program.

To receive a statement of IMS Montessori school membership criteria and application information, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910.

IMS Independent Study

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The International Montessori Society provides the essential "inner preparation" for Montessori teachers through a process of completing independent study lessons sent to IMS through the mail - a comprehensive written dialogue between IMS and the individual student encompassing the entire essential basis of Montessori education at the age level of the course.

The IMS Independent Study Course affords a most thorough "inner preparation" by communicating a complete commitment to Montessori principles - the insuperable "force of nature" which when applied with the young child reveals its genuinely new "normalized" nature: loving order, independent, joyful and spontaneously self-disciplined. Such a profound communication - a uniquely individual process for each student - intends to uncover and resolve one's own unconscious inner barriers which deter the ability to actualize and express a commitment to Montessori principles with children.

Ultimately, the IMS Independent Study Course enables the individual to consciously master the ability to create a fully effective "normalizing environment for the child - completely independent of all external forces and circumstances.

For application and enrollment information about IMS independent study or Montessori teacher training, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910.

PATTERN OF SOCIETY

"... the erroneous belief has persisted that it is the duty of the adult to fashion the child according to the pattern required by society."

Maria Montessori

from Peace and Education (1943), p. 18