



The Montessori OBSERVER

Social Life

Published by the International Montessori Society • 912 Thayer Ave. • Silver Spring, Md. 20910 • Phone (301) 589-1127



Children working with practical life exercises at the Hammond School (Roswell, Georgia)

Society Sets Conference Schedule

The Society has now set its schedule of Montessori conferences on "managing misbehavior" for the 1986-87 school year. Open to the general public, the Society's new two-day weekend conference will be conducted from 9-5 each day at various key locations throughout the United States. The specific schedule is:

November 22-23, 1986New York, NY

February 7-8, 1987San Francisco, CA

March 7-8, 1987Dallas, TX

April 25-26, 1987Los Angeles, CA

May 16-17, 1987Detroit, MI

The Society offers this series of conferences to address the practical teaching problem of applying Montessori principles to manage the misbehavior of children. Based on one's commitment to the three Montessori principles of (1) Observation, (2) Individual Liberty, and (3) Preparation of the Environment, the conference includes an analysis of specific misbehavior scenarios according to the approach of "control the environment, not the child." In addition, the conference will afford an opportunity for consideration and resolution of other misbehavior problems from the everyday experience and circumstances of those in attendance.

The broader purpose of these conferences is to continue the Society's work of expanding

awareness of the practical application of Montessori principles among teachers, parents and others interested in the care and education of children. Specifically, the conference intends to help participants to:

(1) create an effective environment for the peaceful resolution of misbehavior of children;

(2) clarify and enhance one's effective practical application of Montessori principles with children; and

(3) resolve personal needs, interests and concerns with regard to Montessori teaching.

The conference speaker is **Lee Havis**, founder and executive director of the International Montessori Society. Active in teaching and education at all age levels since 1967, he has over ten (10) years of experience in the training of Montessori teachers. Mr. Havis presently supervises the preparation of individuals for Montessori teaching through the Society's "Independent Study Course." Mr. Havis has published several articles and is editor of the Society's regular publications, the *Montessori Observer* and *Montessori News*.

Conference registration is completed in advance through the Society. Since participation is limited to space available, early registration is

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3

Hammond School in Roswell, Georgia

The Hammond School in Roswell, Georgia, offers a broad range of choices in Montessori education, including a Beginners class, three Primary classes, an Elementary (6-9) class, and an Afterschool Program. **Toni Hammond**, owner and director of this Society member school, believes that all children deserve the benefits available from a Montessori program, and has structured her school program to meet the varied needs of its students and families. By offering half-day, full day (9-3), and extended day (6:45 a.m.-6:30 p.m.) options to its Primary students, the school is able to meet the scheduling needs of a wide variety of family situations.

Toni Hammond has previously owned schools in Garland, Texas. She and her husband, Tom, moved to the Atlanta, Georgia area four years ago. Three of their six children currently attend the Hammond School. Ms. Hammond is presently enrolled as a student in the Society's "Independent Study Course," as well as are several members of her teaching staff.

The Hammond School opened in spring of 1985, and has grown steadily to a near-capacity enrollment. This fall of 1986 was the first time elementary age students were enrolled at the school, thus fulfilling one of Ms. Hammond's major goals for the school. Future plans include the addition of an upper elementary class next fall.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1

Reflections

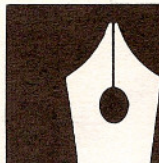
*by Friedl Bell
(Eugene, Oregon)*

*Friedl Bell is a student in the Society's
"Independent Study Course."*

A Personal Barometer

A personal barometer which I use to gauge my progress in my commitment to the three Montessori principles is by how I perceive my fatigue. The independent study course has indirectly shown me that I experience two kinds of fatigue: nervous versus creative. I recognize that nervous fatigue is directly proportional to my efforts to control: I become tense, irritable, impatient, "burned out" at the end of the day. If, on the other hand, I commit to the three

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 2



Social Life

by Lee Havis

"Only 'normalized' children aided by their environment, show in their subsequent development those wonderful powers that we describe: spontaneous discipline, continuous and happy work, social sentiments of help and sympathy for others."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 207

The "normalized" child—being in complete harmony with its environment—reveals a social life with others which is remarkably distinct from that which is otherwise customarily expected from children. Ordinarily, the child is either abandoned to its random chaotic mischief or compelled to accommodate itself to others according to various forms of irrational customs which prevail in one's particular cultural setting. Based essentially on hypocrisy, superstition and fear, conventional adult social life is generally recognized in its superficial form as that which is known as "politeness" or "good manners".

Good Manners

"How often will a gentleman, in the name of good manners, move the chair forward as a lady is seating herself at a table, although the lady can quite well do it for herself; . . . But in cases of real want, everything changes. No one comes running when there is dire need of help; but when there is no need, everyone helps!"

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 229

The "good manners" of adult society tend to mask an underlying condition of general fear which is the dominant reality of one's ordinary interaction with others. Born in one's early experiences with others as an infant, fear in the company of others is ordinarily engendered through such experiences as being roughly handled by others during the birth process and thereafter during the most delicate and intimate feeding and care procedures employed by one's adult care-givers. As the child continues to defend itself from such customary forms of callous neglect and mistreatment from adults, there arises within the child a general condition of revulsion for its entire environment.

Revulsion

" . . . if—from early infancy—the child feels a revulsion for the surroundings on which he depends for his development, this must necessarily prevent him from growing up normally."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 77

Painful birth procedures, scheduled feeding and other such hostile impositions on the infant's natural path of development tend to result in its general revulsion to almost all spontaneous human contact. As the child continues to avoid such experience of normal social activity with others, natural instincts towards independent functioning and full expression of feelings become increasingly restricted and repressed.

Repression

"A child cannot develop and expand as it should because an adult 'represses' it . . . ordinarily this would be first his mother, then his father and finally his teacher."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 131

Repressing awareness of painful environmental experience, the child creates an illusion to hide and defend itself from the reality of its true underlying condition of fear in the company of others. Even kindly approaches by an adult or other children may then automatically engender avoidance or rejection for no outwardly apparent reason. The child's inner drama of repression of its true feelings towards others then becomes outwardly expressed in disguised form as its emerging superficial personality.

Superficial Personality

" . . . the child of three . . . is a fighter on the verge of being vanquished; he has already adopted a defensive attitude which masks his deeper nature . . . All that remains active is a superficial personality which exhausts itself in clumsy movements, vague ideas, and the effort to resist or avoid adult constraint."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 264

The child in outer form is generally perceived only as its superficial personality—i.e., habituated behavior and patterns of thought associated with such phenomena as play, fantasy, weakness, dependency and general inattention to the demands of independent social functioning. Whereas the child's true nature is that of an independent creative being in complete harmony with its environment, its superficial personality belies such inner true nature. In truth, the child's superficial personality serves as a complex defensive mechanism to avoid or escape from a painful underlying reality of fear and hostility which would otherwise emerge in the company of others.

Defensive Mechanism

"A kind of veil descends upon a child's mind that renders it increasingly less responsive. Through this defensive mechanism the soul unconsciously says, 'You speak, but I do not listen. You keep repeating, but I do not hear you. I cannot build up my own world since I am too busy erecting a wall to keep you out.'"

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 158

The child's defensive mechanism of "personality" provides an effective shield from the typical pattern of continuing negative judgment, manipulation, insult, blame and criticism from adults which often unconsciously emerges under the guise of "helping" or "teaching". Confronted by the ordinary child's sullen or hostile disobedience or resistance to such "help", the typical adult tends to

add insult to injury by "blaming" the child for misbehavior which more properly would be seen as caused by detrimental influences in the environment for which the adult is clearly responsible. Such adult "blame" becomes generally incorporated in the child's self-image as "guilt" and "shame" by about the age of six or seven.

Blame

" . . . children . . . do not understand us, they cannot defend themselves from us, and they accept whatever we tell them. They not only accept abuse, but feel guilty whenever we blame them."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 151

Through the mechanism of the "absorbent mind", children readily engender a self-image of "dependency", "badness", "guilt" or "failure" as a result of continuing adult blame and judgmental criticism. Such a diminished self-image finds its outer expression with others in a sort of frustrated struggle to comply with various superficial social conventions and rules associated with "politeness" and "good manners".

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2

Look for the
November Observer
featuring
Discipline

The Montessori Observer
ISSN 0889-5643

published by
INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY
912 Thayer Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 589-1127

Lee Havis, Executive Director

The *Montessori Observer* is mailed six times each year to Society members throughout the world. The *Observer* is sent during the months of January, March, May, September, October and November. The purpose of this publication is to provide news and information about the development of Montessori education to extend awareness of Montessori principles and to 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 Society's purpose is to support the effective application of Montessori principles throughout the world.

IMS ADVISORY BOARD

Elizabeth Hainstock, Educator, Author
Romalda Spalding, Reading Specialist
Dr. R. Orin Cornett, Research Professor

SUBSCRIPTION

Subscription to this *Observer* publication may be obtained by requesting Society membership which is open to all individuals for a \$15 annual fee. Society members also receive a subscription to the *Montessori News*. Send request for membership benefits.

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 the Society to conform to space requirements. Write for the Society's advertising outline as to rates and other information about design advertising.

©1986 International Montessori Society

September 13, 1986

Mr. Havis:

I was so glad to have been given an opportunity to meet you and attend at the Texas Montessori Conference. I could understand that you were so interested in pre-school education in Japan, and eager to spread out your own thought of Montessori education and your Society's principles in Japan.

It is my pleasure that I am given an opportunity to introduce you and your Society, and to help your wish come true. I am planning to make a speech on you and your Society at the annual conference held by the Japan Early-Childhood Educational Association next spring, 1987, in Tokyo. . .

I am looking forward to seeing you again in U.S. or in Japan. I wish your success in Japan.

Sincerely yours,

Kimiko Kai, Assoc. Professor
Dept. of Child Education
Kyusyu Jogakuin Jr. College
Kumamoto, Japan

May 1, 1986

Dear Mr. Havis,

Greetings from Canada! It is so wonderful to receive my newsletters throughout the year. I sometimes feel that you contribute so much to my dedication to Montessori, and I give so little back to IMS. The children indirectly benefit though from your support. I watch my mailbox for your insights. Merci beaucoup. . .

Best of luck in all current and future endeavors of the Society. We are all behind you.

Very sincerely,

Janet Davies
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

September 18, 1986

Dear Mr. Havis:

In reference to your September, 1986, "Harmony" issue which contains a write-up regarding Belleair Montessori School, the article stated that Belleair is one of the oldest Montessori schools in the southeastern region of the United States, this is incorrect and should be corrected to read: The Belleair Montessori School in Clearwater, Florida is one of the oldest Montessori schools on the western coast of Florida.

Thank you,

Joan Kirk
Head Directress
Belleair Montessori School

September 14, 1986

Dear Lee,

I am so glad that I was able to attend the conference (Corpus Christi, Texas, August 16-17, 1986). . .

I want to thank you for each correspondence you have sent. Each one has lifted my spirits, given me hope, reminded me that I am not alone and reminded me of my commitment to Montessori and to the future when in the middle of the day it is easy to forget commitments. . .

I look forward to learning and understanding and one day having normalized children in my environment who have bright and challenging futures. Maybe in the process I will become normalized too.

Thank you,

Alecia Lopes
Livingston, Texas

September 15, 1986

Dear Lee,

. . . thank you for a truly interesting, and enlightening weekend. I have applied the "three Montessori principles" many times (with great difficulty at first) with tremendous results. I am working at removing the "drama" from a child's situation and am dedicating myself to my "hospital for sick spirits".

I am having the best school year yet! Thank you so much!

Madeline Stevenson
Elmont, New York

Ed. Note: Madeline Stevenson is referring to her experiences resulting from her participation in the Montessori conference held on August 16-17, 1986 in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3

Social Life

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

Social Conventions

"Conventions which camouflage a man's true feelings are a spiritual lie which help him adapt to the organized deviations of society. . . This is the terrible lie lurking in the deepest recesses of the subconscious."

Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 176

Ordinary social life among children reflects many of the same hypocritical and distorted social conventions common in adult society. Manipulative "friendships", dependency, conformity with irrational rules and fantasy gradually develop in a child's social life which unfolds itself as a drama dominated by whatever superficial sensation or external stimuli which may be present at the time. Group interaction tends to reflect a pattern of thoughtless reactivity and random imitation of others.

Imitation

"The foolish act is multiplied in the group. . . In a crowd, the spirit of imitation spreads and enhances individual defects."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 267

"Imitation" is the customary pattern of social life in ordinary children—either docile conformity with the dictates and direction of adult authority or reactive compliance with some other dominant personality or external stimuli emerging in the typical "play" of children abandoned to a world of fantasy. In either case, such imitative social life invariably expresses itself as a considerable dependency on others.

Dependency

"... children . . . attach themselves to an older person who tends to substitute his own activity for theirs and they thus become extremely dependent upon him."

Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 161

Subdued and weakened by prior environmental oppression, the ordinary child is easily subjugated to whatever dominant personality or adult authority which may be present at the time. The dependent child gradually grows into the typical adult "victim of circumstances"—fearful and insecure in an unfriendly world of vaguely callous, repressive and unfeeling economic and political forces and institutions. "Society" emerges as a mysterious tyrant to constantly oppose and repress one's creative endeavor and expression throughout life.

The Mysterious Tyrant

"The master of all is a mysterious entity. The tyrant is all powerful, like a god. It is the environment that swallows up and crushes the man."

Maria Montessori

from *The Formation of Man*, p. 17

Adult social life—generally dominated by the ever-lurking fear of mysterious forces outside oneself—engenders a similarly fearful social life in children through means of traditional education. By contrast, Montessori teaching expresses a new reality of commitment to the

fundamental principles of (1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment" whereby a process of "normalization" within the child re-integrates its being to that of complete natural harmony and peace with others. Such "normalization" process begins within the child as profound concentration through a period of deep solitary seclusion with some particular piece of work freely chosen by the child itself.

Seclusion

"The child who concentrates is immensely happy; he ignores his neighbors or the visitors circulating about him. . . he detaches himself from the world in order to attain the power to unite himself with it. . . To exist and mix with our fellow men we must sometimes retire into solitude and acquire strength; only then do we look with love on the creatures who are our fellows."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 272-273

The child begins to form a "normal" social life in the Montessori environment through a period of seclusion and profound concentration. The teacher's being as commitment to Montessori principles tends to spontaneously diminish the adult's distracting presence as "personality" in the environment to enable the child to proceed effectively with its solitary work. Emerging from such seclusion, the "normalized" child shows a remarkable level of love and concern for others—far surpassing that which is otherwise ordinarily known in society.

"Normalized" Social Life

"When he comes out of his concentration, he seems to perceive the world anew as a boundless field for fresh discoveries. He also becomes aware of his classmates in whom he takes an affectionate interest. Love awakens in him for people and for things. He becomes friendly to everyone. . . . The result of concentration is an awakening of the social sense. . ."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 272-273

The "normalized" child shows a natural social life of deep and sincere friendship with all others. "Good manners" assume an effortless and spontaneous quality with such children which is strikingly distinct from the typical hypocrisy and superficial politeness of ordinary adult social life. The "normalized" social life of children in a Montessori environment reveals a vision and hope for a new similar social life of harmony and peace in the future for all humanity throughout the world.

Marketplace

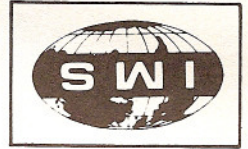
MONTESSORI SCHOOL in the Tampa, Florida area is looking for a new owner. This is a complete turn key operation including Land, Building, and Equipment. For information, contact Eulanda Summer, Solid Gold Properties, III, Inc. Hometrend 1-800-221-7653 or 813-985-5565.

New MCP Phonetic Practice Readers, SERIES B—4-set series (40 books) of interesting stories with phonetically controlled vocabulary. Price is \$38.88 for entire 40-book set. Be sure to specify "Series B." Add \$3.50 for postage. Prepaid only. 20% discount for Society members.

Address correction requested

912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910

OBSERVER The Montessori



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 3875
Silver Spring, MD

Announcements

Georgia Montessori Conference: On October 24-25, 1986, Lee Havis, executive director of the International Montessori Society, will conduct a conference in Roswell, Georgia on the application of Montessori principles with children. Sponsored by the Hammond School (Roswell, Georgia), the conference is open to the general public and will consider an analysis of specific misbehavior scenarios for resolution according to the approach of "control the environment, not the child."

The conference schedule is: Friday, October 24, 1986 (7-10 pm) and Saturday, October 25, 1986 (9-5). Conference fee is \$70 per person, payable in advance to the Hammond School.

To register or to obtain further information, contact: Toni Hammond, The Hammond School, 11275 Elkins Rd., Roswell, Georgia 30075, Tel. (404) 442-1082.

Hammond School

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

The school's Afterschool program provides care for public school students, offering computer experiences, cooperative games, outdoor activities, art and craft sessions, as well as a quiet time to tackle their homework in an environment conducive to good work habits. All students at the school are invited to participate in such special events as gymnastics classes at the Roswell Recreation Center; "The Nutcracker Experience," an introduction to the ballet; dance classes offered at the school; foreign language instruction as part of the school day, and a physical education program created specifically for use in Montessori Schools.

The Hammond School is sponsoring a Montessori conference on "managing misbehavior" on October 24-25, 1986. Open to the general public, this conference will be conducted by Lee Havis, executive director of the International Montessori Society. Conference fee is \$70 per person payable to the school in advance.

For more information, contact: Toni Hammond, The Hammond School, 11275 Elkins Road, Roswell, Georgia 30075. Tel. (404) 442-1082.



Child working with sensorial exercise at the Hammond School (Roswell, Georgia)

Reflections

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 2

Montessori principles, I can channel my energies into more creative thought: How can I improve the environment? What child needs what in terms of presentations, encouragement? And with the latter circumstances, I am tired yet inspired.

But the best indicator to the extent of my commitment to the three Montessori principles can be seen in observing the children. I perceive that those who were timid are becoming more independent; those who could not decide what to do concentrate for longer periods of time; those who were masters at "power struggles" are not being "rewarded" by my reactive behavior. The children are constructing themselves . . . We are all calmer.

Society Conference Schedule

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 2

encouraged. Conference fee is \$150 per person. Society member fee is \$120 per person. A light lunch and refreshments for both days of the conference is included. For registration form or further information, contact: International Montessori Society, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910, Tel. (301) 589-1127.

Letters to IMS

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 1

March 31, 1986

To IMS:

. . . A few weeks ago one of my teachers had a personal emergency and had to take a week off work. Instead of calling in a substitute I took the class myself. I put to use everything I have learned in your training course. I thoroughly enjoyed teaching using the Montessori method. I can see now that this method will work beautifully. The children were anxious to learn each morning. Everyday they would recall something they learned the day before. There is one child in that class who did not have any desire to learn, who never finished anything. That week he amazed me by being eager and finishing learning projects or work that I did not know he could do before. Even some of the children's parents commented on the teaching that week. . .

Carolyn Smith
Baytown, Texas

Ed. Note: Carolyn Smith directs her own child care center and is a student in the Society's Montessori teacher training program.

August 28, 1986

Dear Mr. Havis,

I am now in the classroom after a summer of lessons from you. I am enjoying this year so much more. I am constantly amazed at the results I am getting from my new "being". I have seen children concentrating and I know my "personality" did not interfere. I have re-directed children with great results when a few months ago I would have probably scolded them and made matters worse . . . knowing I can make the difference, knowing I can control this not too perfect person makes me feel great inside. Working with the children in accordance with the Montessori principles gives me a "high" that makes all this hard work and long hours well worth it.

Sincerely,

Virginia Jones
Liburn, Georgia

Ed. Note: Virginia Jones is a student in the Society's "Independent Study Course" and is reflecting on her experiences resulting from this communication.