



The Montessori

Education

OBSERVER

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Revised Membership Fees Promote Participation

The new \$100 per year fee (plus \$40 for each additional school site) for Montessori school membership with the Society intends to expand substantial participation with the Society's work through such means as local conferences, teacher training and school consultation. The current low Montessori school membership renewal rate of \$45 per year (plus \$20 for each additional school site) will now apply only for those schools which have actively participated with the Society during the prior 12-month period. "Active participation" means that the school has one of its staff as an active participating student in the Society's Montessori teacher training program, has conducted a Society consultation, or has attended a conference sponsored by the Society or conducted by Lee Havis.

The new fee structure will enable more active participation of Society member schools to substantiate their public expression of "commitment to Montessori principles"—one of the primary essential criteria for Society recognition as a "Montessori school". Executive director of the Society, Lee Havis, states that "being as commitment to Montessori principles is expansive in nature and therefore implicates a continuing substantial participation and communication—beyond that which can be reasonably assured by the mere receipt of such written publications as the *"Montessori News"* and *"Montessori Observer"*. The new fee structure will enable the Society to more effectively support and substantiate the integrity of the Montessori school membership criteria."

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Montessori Conferences

International Montessori Society Conference entitled "Creating the New Education." Lee Havis, speaker and discussion leader on Montessori teaching, featuring "managing misbehavior". Prepaid registration, \$150 (\$120 for Society members). Dates and places are: Los Angeles, CA, April 25-26, 1987; Detroit, MI, May 16-17, 1987; Columbia, SC, August 8-9, 1987. Send registration fee or for further information, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910, Tel. (301) 589-1127.

Pennsylvania Montessori Conference, sponsored by Montessori Country Day School in Wyomissing, PA (near Philadelphia), March 28-29, 1987. Lee Havis, speaker and discussion leader on issues such as "managing misbehavior". Two-day fee \$85; Sat. only, \$45. Send prepaid registration or for further information, contact: Celia Reed, Montessori Country Day School, 2200 Bern Rd., Wyomissing, PA 19610, Tel. (215) 373-7828.



Children working with math materials at the Wyomissing Country Day School—Wyomissing, Pennsylvania

Wyomissing School Sponsors Pennsylvania Montessori Conference

On March 28-29, 1987, the Montessori Country Day School (Wyomissing, PA) will sponsor a special Pennsylvania Montessori conference conducted by Lee Havis, Society executive director. Based on one's being as "commitment to Montessori principles", this conference will focus primarily on the practical issue of managing the misbehavior of children; e.g., analyzing and resolving various misbehavior scenarios from the daily experience of those in attendance according to the approach of "control the environment, not the child"

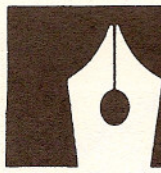
Located in a suburb of Reading, Pennsylvania, the Montessori Country Day School was organized in 1967 as a corporation under the direction of a parent-run board. Celia Reed is the administrator of this Society member school which serves a total enrollment of 62 children aged 1½ to 5 years. The school offers a daily half-day primary program with day care from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Special program features of the school include regular field trips, gymnastics, a newsletter for parents and Spanish as a foreign language. Ms. Reed states that the parents actively participate with the school operation through a "parent's club" which organizes a wide range of supportive projects and activities.

The school sustains a substantial association with the Society through such means as enabling the participation of two of its staff members, Mina Daphtary and Mary Flowers, in the Society's Montessori teacher training program. In addition, the school is expanding further such association through its work of preparation and sponsorship for the Pennsylvania Montessori Conference (March 28-29, 1987).

During the past several months, the school staff and parents have been working with considerable diligence and energy to assure the broadest possible participation in the conference. A particular effort is being made to assure a maximum of convenience and economy for all those attending. Sleeping accommodations during the weekend conference are available in nearby hotels for those from outside the local Reading, PA area. In addition, the school staff are offering space in their own homes during the conference for \$15 per night. The total two-day weekend conference fee is a very modest \$85 per person (Saturday only, \$45).

For more information about the school or its March conference, contact: Celia Reed, Montessori Country Day School, 2200 Bern Road, Wyomissing, PA 19610, Tel. (215) 373-7828.



Education

by Lee Havis

"Education is not what the teacher gives; education is a natural process spontaneously carried out by the human individual and is acquired not by listening to words but by experiences upon the environment."

Maria Montessori
from *Ed. for a New World*, p. 3

Dr. Montessori's self-creative view of "education" first arose in 1907 as strikingly distinct from that which is customarily recognized as "education" in society; i.e., "education" as being that which is directly controlled and imposed by adult "teaching". Based on an expansive observation of children free to work according to their own interests in a supportively "prepared environment," Dr. Montessori's vision of a "new education" is premised not on adult "teaching" but rather on one's being committed to certain fundamental principles of nature to discover the reality of a child's own true "normalized" nature emerging of itself; i.e., that being as an instinctive "great worker," spontaneously self-disciplined and inherently inclined to educate itself in complete harmony with others in the present moment.

Despite this remarkable discovery of the child as having a "teacher within" itself, the general public has nevertheless remained largely oblivious to the opportunity and possibility for such a "new education" in the world; assuming the "normalized" child as some sort of impossible "myth" or theoretical "ideal." Since 1907, the miracle of the emergence of the new "normalized" child has therefore remained surprisingly unnoticed and disregarded—unconsciously repressed by the continuous pattern of adult domination of children carried out in the name of their "education".

Official Education

"... the world of official education too put our work aside! ... the 'miracle' was officially relegated to oblivion."

Maria Montessori
from *The Formation of Man*, p. 30-31

Centered on the prevailing prejudices in adult society of the child as essentially weak, dependent, bad or simply devoid or any inherently constructive inner guidance, an "official education" has emerged to unconsciously repress and deny the reality of the child's own true "normalized" nature. Generally controlled by government, this dominant prejudicial form of "education" tends to compel all children to conform to an impersonal standardized curriculum—without regard to their inherent individual differences, needs and interests. Such ordinary "education" inevitably emerges as a "struggle" between the dominant adult authority and the individual child whose own inherent interests and needs in the present moment are sacrificed for the presumptive higher "good" of various academic imperatives to which all must submit

according to various forms of group instruction. Ultimately, the individual child is compelled to conform its own will and being to the overpowering demands, presumptive authority and manipulative influence of adult "teaching".

Old Education

"... the struggle between the adult and the child finds its expression ... in what is still called by the old name of 'Education'."

Maria Montessori
from *Peace and Education*, p. 20

The ordinary "education" of today tends to remain substantially as it was in the past—dominated by a pattern of adult "teaching" based on a prejudicial view of the child as somehow inherently "empty" or "bad." Assuming adult authority as generally that of unquestioned "goodness" and "wisdom", this "old education" invariably confronts any resistance to its various impositions with some form of adult repression.

Repression

"A principle of repression that amounts at times almost to slavery has a firm grip on both schools and education."

Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 10

Assuming its own inherent "goodness", traditional education tends to repress any form of deviation from docile obedience and compliance with its various impositions. Not always "violent," such repression nevertheless has the effect of denying or otherwise disregarding the reality of the child as having its own "teacher within" itself. Environmental experience is accordingly limited essentially to teacher-controlled academic exercises or total abandonment to "play" such as in the activity known as "recess". Like a flock of sheep, children in ordinary schools are generally herded as a group from one teacher-directed activity to another in the process of completing a standardized routine of academic exercises relative to reading, writing, math, and other cultural subjects. Scheduling of assignments, projects, activity and exercises are determined essentially by the demands of a standardized curriculum—interpreted and enforced by prejudicial adult authority which defines and structures the nature, form and substance of this traditional education.

Traditional Education

"To dominate the child, to bring him into subjugation, to make him obedient—this is the basis of (traditional) education. If this can be done by any means whatever, even by violence, all the rest will follow."

Maria Montessori
from *Spontaneous Act*, in *Ed.*, p. 29-30

Ordinary education tends to reflect the well-established tradition of adult domination and

control of children—assuring that the prejudices and limitations of being from one generation are perpetuated to the next. Through means such as "compulsory" schooling laws, government-run "public" schools, oppressive government restriction and control on the operation of private education and the general tendency of parents to conform to prevailing social custom in the treatment of their children, a well-established pattern of traditional education has become pervasively employed and generally accepted throughout one's entire society. Standardized curricula and various prejudicial restrictions on the training and employment of teachers are routinely justified and assumed as somehow "necessary" to assure a sort of uniform "quality"; i.e., to preserve "traditional" values and the presumptive imperatives of proper "socialization". Whatever so-called "alternatives" there may be to such traditional education in society generally abandon children to their own superficial sensations or idle play under the guise of "freedom".

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Look for the
May Observer
featuring
Language

The Montessori Observer

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912 Thayer Ave.
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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.

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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.

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LETTERS TO IMS

December 18, 1986

Dear Sir:

I have read "Montessori News" (October/1986 issue) for the first time and found it excellent! This is my first year teaching . . . and I found your newspaper answered a lot of questions.

Could you please send me information about subscribing to the "Montessori News".

Yours Sincerely,

Catherine Inderwick
Nepean, Ontario, Canada

Ed. Note: The "Montessori News," sent to all Society members, is published and distributed three times each year: January, May and October.

January, 1987

Lee:

The conference (New York, November 22-23, 1986) was so much more than I ever expected. . . it was like a gift for all of us because we were able to learn and exchange ideas and get to know each other. I was really flying high!

. . . Thanks again for a great conference.

Nancy McEvoy
Schenectady, New York

Ed. Note: Nancy McEvoy is a student in the Society's Montessori teacher training program—the "Independent Study Course."

December 11, 1986

Dear Lee

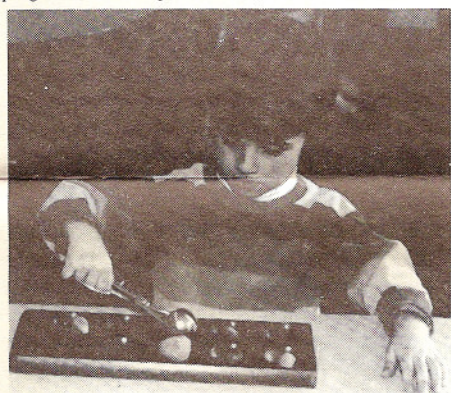
. . . I am so excited about my progress in my commitment to the Montessori principles. This school year I am able to observe the children in my care growing closer and closer to normalize. I am no longer "afraid" to give them liberty. Every day I grow stronger and more confident in my ability to apply the principles. Reactive behavior and language are no longer a part of my "being." I can feel tense without acting tense. I am able to "step back" and observe not only the child but myself . . .

. . . you are so thorough (and exacting) in your training. I do so appreciate all the time you take in responding to my lessons . . .

Seasons Greetings,

Kathleen Kimball
Woodruff, Wisconsin

Ed. Note: Kathleen Kimball refers to her experiences as a student in the Society's Montessori teacher training program—the "Independent Study Course."



Child working with practical life material at the Montessori Country Day School

—Wyomissing, Pennsylvania

Marketplace

Montessori Equipment: excellent quality at moderate prices. Made by: Educational Aids, Ltd. Stock on hand for prompt shipment. For free brochure and price list, write: CABDEV, Incorporated, 1183A Finch Ave. W, Unit 3, Downsview, Ontario M3J 2G2 Canada, Tel. (416) 665-8310. (Exclusive agents and distributors, U.S.A. and Canada. Montessori distributors since 1972)

Education

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Alternative Education

" . . . the attempts of so-called modern education which simply tries to deliver the child from presumed repression are not on the right path. To let the pupils do what they like, to amuse them with light occupations, to lead them back to an almost wild state does not solve the problem."

Maria Montessori

from *The Formation of Man*, p. 19

Despite its claims to "free" children from the repression of traditional teaching, so-called "alternative" education generally tends to unconsciously limit the activity of children to expansion of only those various forms of abnormal expression. Abandoned to "play" and idle fantasy, children in many alternative schools are therefore effectively denied the opportunity for real work freely chosen on behalf of their own true "normal" development. As with traditional education, "alternative" schools likewise tend to subject children to the same essential prejudices and limitations of experience which are commonly accepted throughout the entire society.

Prejudice

"The commonest prejudice in ordinary education is that everything can be accomplished by talking . . . or by holding one's self up as a model to be imitated . . . The child is usually considered a receptive being instead of as an active being."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 254

The primary prejudice of ordinary education is that which assumes adult "teaching" as somehow presumptively "wise" and "good"; the child thus seen as generally "stupid" and "bad" to the extent of its non-compliance with adult authority. Such prejudice implies a child's function as that of limitation and conformity with the various demands and needs of adult "teaching". Substantially guided by the prejudicial need for dominant adult activity and control, traditional education necessarily assumes the function, form and substance of absolute tyranny over the child.

Tyranny

" . . . the kind of education still in vogue condemns the teacher to be a dictator . . . teachers of the older school hold firmly to irrational rules and have little to guide them but illusion and prejudice."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 256

However "benevolent" or "justified" may be its particular form and expression, traditional education nonetheless tends to impose an essential tyranny over the child. However "non-violent" may be one's being with children, typical teaching still employs many subtle forms of repressive adult manipulation; e.g. rewards, punishment, threats, judgmental criticism, emotional dependency, peer pressure. Efforts to "transform" this condition of tyranny and prejudice in education generally arise as rather futile since the central focus of such efforts is ordinarily that of a distorted, limited and prejudicial view of the child; e.g., weak, dependent, bad, stupid, lazy, empty.

Transforming Education

"An attempt is being made to transform education . . . all this however, is being effected around the same figure of the misunderstood child who is seen through eyes distorted."

Maria Montessori

from *The Formation of Man*, p. 73

A true "transformation" of education from tyranny to true freedom for the human spirit must necessarily create a whole "new education"—centered on the vision of a child's own self-directed teaching according to the instruction of its own true "normalized" nature. Even as its outer expression of being may appear at times as quite "disordered", the child is nonetheless seen through one's faith as an inner spirit which will eventually reveal itself outwardly as a result of one's expansive "observation". Such a "new education" finds its essential reality within oneself as the creation of a child's environment as being a complete commitment to certain specific fundamental laws of nature.

New Education

"A new education from birth onward must be built up. Education must be reconstructed and based on the laws of nature and not on the preconceived notions and prejudices of adult society."

Maria Montessori

from *The Formation of Man*, p. 97

Dr. Montessori's vision of a "new education" expresses itself essentially as one's own being with children as a complete commitment to three fundamental principles of nature denoted by the terms: (1) Observation; (2) Individual Liberty; and (3) Preparation of the Environment. Approaching the child as an "unknown entity", one's committed being as such ultimately results in the emergence of the child's own true "normalized" nature in the course of time. Creating the "new education" begins within oneself as a process of growing awareness of these three Montessori principles. With others beyond oneself, this "new education" gradually extends itself outwardly as a sort of "non-violent" revolution in the world—challenging the various forces of prejudice and oppression of man's true creative spirit, to result ultimately in the emergence of the new "normalized" child as a tangible reality.

Non-violent Revolution

"Society has built up walls, barriers. These the new education must cast down revealing the free horizon. The new education is a revolution, but without violence. It is the non-violent revolution."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 215

Challenging the traditional role of adult authority over children, the "new education" implicates a revolutionary path of great creative change in society, to discover man's true nature and allow its free expression in the world. While such a "non-violent revolution" asserts a rather direct and obvious challenge to the well-established prejudices and tyranny of adult society regarding the child, its function with children is very "indirect"—to provide a modest yet vital "help" in the child's own self-directed development.

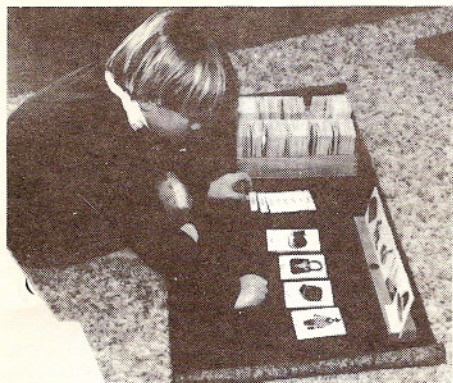
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The Montessori

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Child working with language materials at the Wyomissing Country Day School

Positions & Placements

Montessori Teacher: (6-9). For 1987-88 school year. Able to work in team situation with children and parents of various ethnic backgrounds. Qualities desired are open mindedness, cooperation and flexibility. School located in rural community, serving children aged 2 1/2-12. Salary negotiable. To apply, send resume and list of references to: Deidre Waller, P.O. Box 1604, Kamuela, Hawaii, 96743, Tel. (808) 885-4141 ASAP.

Montessori Teacher: (6-9); (9-12). Two teachers needed for private non-sectarian school in northern suburb of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Desire teachers with imagination and flexibility able to create their own environments. School has cooperative and experienced staff who value teacher input. Salary negotiable. Contact: Lucy McKay, Adm., Northern Lights School, 850 South St., Anoka, Minnesota 55304. Tel. (612) 421-0653, after 5:00 p.m. (612) 427-8508.

Montessori Teacher: (3-6) needed for additional class, Sept. 87. Excellent conditions, competitive salary and benefits. True "Children's House" setting and operation. Prefer experience. Contact Staunton Montessori School, P.O. Box 722, Staunton, VA 24401. Tel. (703) 885-4301

Montessori Teacher: (3-6) for school located on the San Francisco peninsula. School in 21st year. Program hours 9-3:30, a.m. and p.m. sessions. No day care. Opening summer month of July or September. School closed August and all public school holidays. Would hire immediately. Contact: Menlo Montessori Pre-school, 3300 Alpine Rd., Menlo Park, Ca 94025 Tel. (415) 854-3264.

POSITION WANTED:

Montessori Teacher/Administrator: Mature, experienced with young children. Presently enrolled in Society's "Independent Study Course". Willing to relocate in United States for fall, 1987 position. References on request. Contact: Linda Jacobi-Wallin, 5021 West McGuire Rd., Lincoln, Nebraska 68524, Tel. (402) 551-1500 or (402) 470-2319.

Education

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Help to Development

"Our goal in the education of a young child should be to help him develop, and not to furnish him with a kind of culture."

Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 170

Applying the fundamental principle of "preparation of the environment", the Montessori teacher provides various objects and opportunities for self-creative work, independent activity and experience according to the child's own interests in the present moment. Such "indirect" teaching recognizes that development is engendered uniquely within the child itself—not somehow "caused" by the will of external authority such as commonly assumed in traditional education.

Cause of Development

"Anyone can dominate and repress the weak and subdued; but no one can cause another to develop. Development cannot be taught."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 206

Common in all forms of traditional education—even that which arises under the guide of "Montessori"—is the presumptive need for direct adult "teaching" to assure a child's development. True Montessori "teaching" recognizes the cause of development within the child itself, offering only a modest "indirect" assistance to the child through means of the "prepared environment." This "new education" consistently aims to support and sustain the child's own independent "normalized" development—free of the otherwise customary forms of unconscious imposition of the adult personality.

Purpose of Education

"The great task of education must be to secure and preserve a normality which, of its own nature, gravitates towards the center of perfection."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 239

While society continues to look to "education" to ultimately help solve the wide range of

complex problems in the world, the content and "quality" of such "education" remains rather academic and irrelevant to the extent that its underlying assumptions about fundamental "reality" remain unchallenged. Centered essentially on the prejudicial "reality" of the child as limited physicality, devoid of its own self-creative spirit, any form of ordinary "quality education" will continue to fail in its ultimate fundamental purpose. Hollow "lip service", more money and futile superficial gestures for such "quality education" only distract attention away from the compounding danger of continued ignorance and the countervailing urgency for enlightenment and freedom for man's true creative spirit. Only a genuine "new education"—committed to fundamental principles of nature and centered on Dr. Montessori's vision of the "normalized" child—can fulfill the true purpose of education to help children create and develop a better, stronger and more perfect humanity in the world.

Revised Membership Fees

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

The Society's recent series of unique Montessori conferences throughout the United States serves to enhance the "active participation" of member schools in the Society's work of "creating the new education". Open to the general public, future Society conferences are scheduled for Los Angeles, California (April 25-26, 1987) and Detroit, Michigan (May 16-17, 1987). In addition, a Pennsylvania Montessori Conference, sponsored by the Montessori Country Day School (Wyomissing, PA) will be conducted by Lee Havis in Wyomissing, PA on March 28-29, 1987. Attendance at this conference also qualifies as "active participation" to assure member schools of the current low renewal rate of \$45 per year.

To apply or to obtain further information about the Society's Montessori school membership program, its fee structure or participation opportunities, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910, Tel. (301) 589-1127.