



The Montessori

OBSERVER

Relationship

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Ann Southworth, coordinator of Child Care Seminar sponsored by Washington Lawyer's Committee, held in Washington, D.C. on October 12, 1989.

Washington Lawyers Work for Child Care

On October 12, 1989, the Washington Lawyers' Committee of the District of Columbia Bar Association sponsored a one-day seminar entitled "Legal and Business Aspects of Starting and Operating Child Care Centers". Lee Havis, Society executive director, attended on behalf of the interest of Montessori education.

This very informative seminar continues prior similar efforts by the Washington Lawyer's Committee to help encourage the development of much needed high quality child care programs for the local Washington, D.C. area. Topics presented by experienced lawyers in the field included: zoning issues, organizational structure, financial and budgetary issues, employment relationship, AIDS and related health problems, parent/center relationship, liability insurance and employer-sponsored child care. Each participant received a book of specific forms and additional information relating to the topics presented.

After its completion, Havis stated that "the seminar provided much valuable information which will help the Society to more effectively advise and counsel those who are interested in starting and operating their own Montessori school. This type of advance planning is particularly vital in the 'child care' business where the obstacles of considerable start-up costs, high over-head and restrictive staff qualifications work so much against one's effective practical efforts."

Interested Society members are invited to contact the Society for more specific information on starting and operating a Montessori school.

Ten Years of Progress in Creating the New Education

In 1989, the International Montessori Society completed its first ten years of operation in the work of "creating the new education". Progress during the course of this ten-year history is reflected by the following significant events:

February, 1980: The first issue of the "Montessori Observer", is published; curriculum for primary (2-6) and elementary (6-12) teacher education first established.

October, 1980: Proposal offered for inclusive umbrella accreditation agency for Montessori teacher education.

September, 1981: Society files suit in U.S. federal court against officials in state of Maryland to challenge their actions in prohibiting operation of the Society's Montessori teacher education in that state.

December, 1981: Approval to operate Society's teacher education in state of California.

September, 1982: First issue of "Montessori News".

September, 1983: First graduating class from Society teacher education.

July, 1984: First graduate of Society's "Independent Study Course".

October, 1984: First accreditation issued to Society's Montessori teacher education.

November, 1984: Society's teacher education certification recognized in state of California.

November, 1986: First Society conference "creating the new education" (New York, U.S.A.)

May, 1987: Meeting to discuss formation of inclusive umbrella accreditation agency for Montessori teacher education (Silver Spring, MD)

May, 1988: Society joins "Americans for Choice in Education"—a broad coalition of groups in the United States working for educational freedom.

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 3

Reflections...

By Bonnie Sanders
(Monterey, California)

On Normalization

Very young children seem to find such deep satisfaction in repeating the exercises with the knobbed cylinders, as they do with so many of the practical life exercises. I am wondering if these exercises somehow allow these children, in this special time of their life, the opportunity to resolve some hidden birth trauma in a concrete way. Each cylinder fits securely in its own 'womb'. Maybe a child gains some feeling of control over his life as he puts the cylinders in and takes them out, over and over until he is satisfied and able to return the puzzle to the shelf, perhaps never to work with it again.

It is as though he has made sense out of something he didn't understand. The same seems to be true of pouring exercises. He pours substance into and out of containers over and over until he is satisfied. I only think this because of the great change in children after this concentration. Something truly miraculous is happening to these children any time normalization occurs.

Is some barrier being broken through so the child can now be himself? Isn't more going on with these children than just learning to discriminate size? Scrubbing must have a resolving effect in some way also. Something more important must be going on in the child than just satisfaction in cleaning the surface.

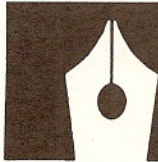
Montessori Conferences

Atlanta, Georgia
February 17-18, 1990

San Leandro, California
March 10-11, 1990

Pre-paid registration for the full two-day conference is \$200 per person (\$160 for Society members). The payment due date is four (4) weeks before the scheduled date of the conference. A late fee of \$50 applies for registrations submitted after the payment due date.

Send registration fee to: International Montessori Society, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. Tel. (301) 589-1127.



Relationship

by Lee Havis

"... life of all kinds form a whole in relation with each other, and so close is this relation that we cannot understand a stone without some understanding of the great sun."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Ed. the Hum. Potential*, p. 9

True relationship in life expresses the ultimate balance and harmony of all being with the whole evolving process of creation. In Montessori education, such "normality" of relationship emerges with children in perfect balance with the adult's distinctive way of being committed to three fundamental principles of nature; e.g., (1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment". Such Montessori teaching allows children to "normalize" through their own spontaneous activity with each other in a manner which is strikingly distinct from the customary repression of the ordinary adult-child relationship. Misunderstanding, confusion and controversy may therefore well arise in one's activity and efforts with others in the everyday industry and commerce of Montessori school operation.

Industry and Commerce

"All living beings are destined to contribute to the well-being of other living beings . . . Each man works for other men. Industry and commerce may be considered as an active relationship comparable to that found in nature."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 89

Montessori schools function in the commerce of "education" and "day care" to engender relationships far beyond their ordinary outward appearances directed to such matters as economic gain and a more comfortable or convenient physical existence. In Montessori education, adults serve a primary purpose which enables the child to realize its own inborn instincts for a normal relationship of complete harmony with all life and being in the world. Such a purpose for "normality" allows the child to naturally acquire a vast wealth of knowledge and mental capacity from its environment by a continuing process of correlation.

Correlation

"Everything is interrelated and, beginning with a detail, one arrives at the whole by correlation."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 46

Montessori teaching frees children to relate to the environment according to their own interests—to correlate various physical details with others to thereby gradually experience the total interrelated functioning of the whole. By contrast, traditional teaching tends to deter this process of correlation by imposing an adult-

controlled group instruction which rigidly separates one subject matter area from another. With such traditional education, children are subjected to the ordinary adult-child relationship which limits and represses their natural self-expression by the functioning of a vast collective subconscious pattern of prejudicial thinking in society.

Collective Subconscious

"All lean up each other. The whole of society forms a collective subconscious wherein all act in complete agreement when they remove and suppress the child."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p. 68

The traditional adult-child relationship is built on a pattern of repression which reflects the widespread subconscious belief that children are essentially "bad" or "empty." By contrast, Montessori teaching expresses a new adult-child relationship which views the child as essentially an "unknown entity". Montessori education therefore allows the child to freely reveal its own inborn instincts towards normal growth and development which emerge in outer form through its various spontaneous interests and activity in the environment. Following such principles as "observation", the Montessori teacher serves this "unknown" child in the manner of a good valet attending to one's master.

A Good Valet

"... the relationship between child and teacher is in the spiritual field . . . in the way a good valet looks after his master . . . the master whom the teacher serves in the child's spirit."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 281

As a 'good valet', the Montessori teacher creates a relationship of trust with the child as opposed to the ordinary disruptive influence of traditional teaching directed primarily to the delivery of a pre-determined curriculum. The 'good valet' serves the child's spirit by gently offering various opportunities for the child's own independent functioning and self-directed activity; e.g., by asking constructive questions rather than offering undue "correction" or giving "answers"; by providing self-educational materials rather than conventional "teaching". Such Montessori teaching thereby provides a vital link between the child and its environment.

The Teacher as a Link

"There is a direct interchange between the child and his environment while the teacher with his offerings of motives of interest and his initiatives constitutes primarily a link . . . between them."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p. 52

The Montessori teacher's brief and simple "lesson presentation" aims to link the child's

own interest with the corresponding object of such interest in its environment. Once this link is accomplished, the adult's relationship with the child becomes more as a passive "observer" to enable the child to continue on with its own with further independent exploration and experimentation. Children in such a Montessori environment therefore have the "individual liberty" to complete their normal cycles of relationship through various forms of self-directed action and work.

The Cycle of Relationship

"Powers must be expressed, and so complete the cycle of relationship . . . spiritual uplift is attained through action and work."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Ed. for a New World*, p. 48-49

The normal child is constantly at work and in action to complete its cycles of relationship with various objects and activities of interest in the environment. Through such goal-directed activity, the young child develops its basic mental functioning as a foundation for its entire intellectual capacity in life. Prior to the age of about six, this formative mental development is guided by unconscious inner instincts which enable the child to absorb a basic sense of order from its surrounding physical environment.

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Look for the
March Observer
featuring
Unity

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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 \$20 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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Moment of Peril

Communicating with Parents

from *Observer*, November/1989

by Lee Havis

When parents interact with the teacher during her supervision of children (see *Observer*, November/1989), the potential detrimental influence of the "adult personality" is implicated. Parents as obstacles to one's being a 'commitment to Montessori principles' are seen here as projections of one's own "personality."

To "control" the detrimental imposition of "personality" as it arises in the "moment of peril" with parents (as with any other adults in the environment), is primarily a matter of expansive communication—to listen and respond in words in a manner to clarify one's position and responsibility as a "commitment to Montessori principles."

When there is some continuing serious misbehavior with children at the "moment of peril," one's primary attention must be directed to a careful observation of the children. Therefore, a brief word to the parent; e.g., "just a moment, I must watch the children now to resolve this matter" might be most appropriate. In this case, the teacher would elaborate in more detail about her handling of the specific situation at a later time—to respond to the parent's particular questions or concerns about the approach of "control the environment, not the child."

In the present situation, the "misbehavior" of one child spitting in the face of another child does not appear to unduly threaten any serious physical harm to the child involved—so that we have primarily a detrimental influence of "adult personality" in the form of the parent's impatience and embarrassment. A brief word of explanation at this "moment of peril" would therefore seem most useful to help the parent appreciate the importance of patience and observation in this situation—to allow the children to work out their problem themselves without adult interference. The parent can thereby come to understand how Montessori principles are applied to help the children develop true independence and normal social harmony with others.

Kicking the Teacher

Three year old Eric has grabbed several objects off the shelf and has carelessly dropped them to the floor. As Eric reaches for another object, the teacher places a firm hand on the new object, whereupon Eric begins to pull very hard to obtain possession. The teacher does not let go. After a brief period of pulling, Eric looks up at the teacher and shouts angrily 'let me have it!' As the teacher continues to maintain a firm hand on the object, Eric proceeds to hit, spit and kick the teacher. What to do?

Answer in *Observer*, January/1990.

Relationship

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

Order

"... order ... is a kind of inner sense that distinguishes the relationships between various objects rather than the objects themselves."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 55

Order builds itself up within the child as one object in the environment is related to another through the child's active sensory exploration and experience. The young child thereby "absorbs" its external order which then becomes an intimate aspect of its entire fundamental personality formation during early childhood. Normal development of the young child's whole being is therefore critically determined by the nature of its relationship with the environment.

Child and Environment

"In this sensitive relationship between a child and his surroundings may be found the means for untangling the raveled skein of mystery that surrounds the spiritual growth of a child in all its wonders."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 42

The young child develops normally in life as its relationship with the environment is supported by the adult's being as a commitment to the three Montessori principles. "Misbehavior" and "disorder" exist in children only as a reflection of a corresponding detrimental influence in the environment for which the adult must necessarily assume responsibility in its identification and correction. By such "preparation of the environment", the adult thereby allows all misbehavior to eventually disappear as the child returns to its own true normal being of spontaneous self-discipline, independence and complete harmony with its entire environment. The new "normalized" child then emerges with a real spirit of harmony and cooperation for others in all its various social relations.

Relations

"It is difficult to make social relations real if one uses only the imagination; practical experience is necessary. One cannot awaken the conscience by talking about it."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 27

Normal social relations emerge in the world as children freely engage in the process of solving their various practical problems with each other in a group situation. Given the principle of "individual liberty" which is necessarily limited by a defined physical space and a specific number of objects, children must practice such vital social skills as "patience" and "sharing". Children thereby tend to find their own peaceful solutions for various social problems—without the ordinary interference of a controlling adult presence. The "normalized" children that emerge from the Montessori environment show a form of true natural justice

Montessori Observer, January, 1990

which is ordinarily quite lacking in practice in ordinary adult society.

Justice

"... the concept of justice is born, simultaneously with the understanding of the relationship between one's acts and the needs of others."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 12

As children adapt their actions to the needs of others in the Montessori environment, normal social relationships come to reflect the quality of true justice as intended by the natural order of the universe. The "normalized" child will happily adjust its own individual functioning and development to the needs and interests of the total group—responding naturally to the changing requirements for a complete harmony throughout the entire environment. As these "normalized" children become adults, a relation in sympathy for one another becomes even more accepted as the true basis of all social interaction in the world.

Relation in Sympathy

"The true relation between man and man, though they be initiated by means of the senses, are established in sympathy."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Spontaneous Act*, in Ed., p. 325

Built on sympathy with others, normal human relationships develop as a natural process of evolving life which is intimately incorporated into the inherent order of the universe as expressed through one's commitment to the three Montessori principles. From the moment of birth, the infant's instincts for survival and physical comfort compel a basic relationship with its mother. Thereafter, this fundamental mother-child relationship extends itself sensorially in the environment and to others to ultimately envision a complete conscious awareness of one's being in life on behalf of the progress of all mankind. Montessori teaching therefore vitally serves to realize man's true normal relationship of complete harmony and being with all life in the universe.

Ten Years of Progress

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

August, 1988: Society's Montessori teacher education certification recognized in state of Texas as "Administrator's credential".

June, 1989: Lee Havis conducts first Montessori conference in Great Britain.

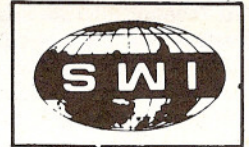
September, 1989: New fee structure to favor "active participation" by recognized Montessori schools.

The Society plans to continue its support for the "new education" in the future along a broad front of challenging problems, interests and needs as reflected by the over 600 Society members throughout the world. Increased efforts will be particularly directed to the practical problems of starting and operating Montessori schools.

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Self Sabotage in Applying Montessori Principles

Adapted from "How to Get Out of your Own Way," by Daniel G. Amen, M.D., published in Parade Magazine. Sunday, September 24, 1989.

"Self-sabotage" in applying Montessori principles is one's own unconscious working against the conscious intention to allow the hoped-for "normalized" child to emerge in complete harmony with its environment. Consider how any of the following "self-sabotage" syndromes might be obstacles in your own personal life and being with others.

Blaming Others: Own up to your feelings and behavior. Reflect on what you have done to contribute to your own difficulties and what you can do to change them. When you can see the faults of others as a reflection of your own "personality," these faults become more subject to one's own responsible resolution.

Lack of Focus: Defining what you want in any circumstance is the first step in getting it. A clear focus on the "normalized" child and the three Montessori principles will help you direct and control your behavior to work through the immediate confusion of various forms of external distraction and disorder; e.g. money, time, energy, feelings, etc.

Not Being Informed: Information is power. Without precise, authentic information about Montessori principles, one is powerless to significantly change the circumstances which unconsciously oppose and repress the emergence of the child's true nature. The Society's publications, conferences and other information is available to you to help overcome the practical problems of applying Montessori principles with children.

Letting yourself be surrounded by negative people: You can choose the people you spend

time with. Unless you take positive action to make the suitable choices, ordinary adult society tends to surround you with others who have a very limited vision and scope of functioning with children and education. The Society's conferences are an excellent opportunity to surround yourself with those who are positively supportive and working consciously for the reality of the "new education" in the world.

Expecting Failure: You basically get what you expect. Active participation with the Society's communication of "commitment to Montessori principles" can help you learn to expect the emergence of the "normalized" child.

Being unable to learn from others: When you have problems or questions about applying Montessori principles, look for answers from someone who might know; e.g., someone supportive and really interested in being a "commitment to Montessori principles."

Self-defeating thinking patterns: Your thoughts may be holding you back. The ordinary unconscious tendency of "personality" is to dwell on the need for repression and control of children—to cover up feelings of impotence, tension and embarrassment. Talk back to your thoughts when they are out of line with "Observation"; "Individual Liberty" and "Preparation of the Environment."

Being stopped by failures: Most of us look at success in the same positive way. It's how we deal with our failures that determines what we get out of life. "Failures" are only "stops" to our being a "commitment to Montessori principles" if we act that way in thought, word and deed. "Failures" may also be seen as valuable "lessons" that teach us how to correct our errors in applying Montessori principles so that the "normalized" child does indeed eventually emerge in the process of creating the "new education."



Madeline Fried presenting "Special Financial and Budgetary Issues" at Child Care seminar held in Washington, D.C. on October 12, 1989.

LETTERS TO IMS

June 20, 1989

Dear Lee,

... The articles you write in your newsletters are just in my own way of thinking. Every time I lecture at the Training Courses or in public when I am invited to speak to parents or teachers it is a sincere cry from my heart to open a new avenue for all children which means a "new education." With experience and maturity I know that this is a crying need for the children of the world and 'more so' here in Sri Lanka. I can sincerely endorse all the principles on which you have focussed attention regarding the Montessori Method and the true nature of childhood . . . I am so sorry I have not had the privilege of attending any of your conferences.

Yours very sincerely,

Sharmini de Zylva
Maharagama, Sri Lanka

September 28, 1989

To IMS:

... After returning to the classroom (after attending the Columbia, South Carolina conference, August 12-13, 1989) I can relax more and feel confident . . . Many of the children I was having trouble with before the conference are now more calm and actually concentrate better now that I'm calm . . .

Terry Patton
Chesnee, South Carolina