

Family Connection

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““We give the child nourishing food so that his little body may grow, and in just the same way we must provide him with suitable nourishment for his mental and moral growth.”

—Maria Montessori, *Maria Montessori Speaks to Parents*, p. 20

BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS:

The Montessori Journey from Independence to Lifelong Learning

BY DOROTHY EWING

There’s a hidden curriculum in a Montessori classroom. From the very beginning, a Montessori teacher’s aim is to build confidence, self esteem and foster the development of executive functioning skills so children succeed in rising to their potential. The Montessori classroom is a place where students can grow academically, emotionally, socially and mature into a positively contributing member of society.



The Toddler Classroom: “Help me do it myself”

“The first aim of the prepared environment is, as far as it is possible, to render the growing child independent of the adult.” —Maria Montessori

Everything in the toddler classroom is made for their height. Shelves, sinks, toilets—everything is easy for them to reach. By putting activities at their level, toddlers can get what they need without needing help from adults. The classroom is set up so that the choices toddlers make are good ones. The Montessori materials they use are self-correcting, which means the toddler can see for themselves if they’re doing things right. This helps them learn to fix mistakes on their own. When they solve problems by themselves or complete tasks on their own, they gain confidence and discover that they can handle difficult things.

The Montessori environment allows children to become the superheroes of their own stories. The achievements they make

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may seem small to us, but they are huge for them—like putting on their shoes, opening a container, putting together a puzzle, or zipping up their jackets. These little successes are the building blocks of independence and self-confidence, which will grow as they move on to the next stage.

The Early Childhood Classroom: Where Leaders are made

“Never gonna give you up, never gonna let you down...” Our students may as well be singing this while they work. The tenacity they built in the toddler classroom carries over. A Kindergarten student might be overheard saying, “This is hard and I’m not giving up!” Imagine a room full of those Kindergarten role models for 3 year old students.

Young students in the primary classroom are continuing to ask questions and solve problems. They are guided by teachers to help them with big emotions and social conflicts. The leaders set the pace. Students in their 3rd year in the early childhood classroom are in their “Leadership Year”. When a student masters a concept they can teach a student who is still practicing. This not only teaches the lesson, but demonstrates leadership to the younger student in a very organic way. Students sit side by side working on their lessons and can see the interconnectedness of academic subjects. They learn how to work with a partner and how to work as a team. Students learn grace and courtesy alongside phonetics and arithmetic.



The Elementary Classroom: Foundation for Lifelong Learning

Time management, planning, organization and task initiation are skills practiced in the elementary classroom. In lower elementary, students are introduced to the concept of planning their work and students take on more of the responsibility of the work they need to complete each week. They prioritize tasks and break down big goals into manageable steps. In doing so, six to twelve year old students are developing the tools they will need to be successful young people and future adults. They practice their new skills in an environment with their peers.

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A course designed for families interested in incorporating the Montessori philosophy into their homes.

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Children learn how to make good decisions by making decisions. They navigate risk-taking by taking risks. And in a Montessori classroom, this is done by managing the choices and keeping the risks low while students flex their executive functioning muscles.

Curiosity is encouraged in a Montessori classroom where students enjoy uninterrupted work periods; something that is not typically found in a traditional school. During these work periods, students are provided the materials, environment, and the inspiration to seek understanding. The student who is fascinated by multiplication with 10's is given the time and opportunity to perhaps discover that multiplication by 100's is just as magical. There is joy in discovery. Montessori allows the freedom and flexibility for students to follow their curiosity.

Montessori: Education For the Whole Child

We don't know what kind of jobs our children will need for the future. What we do know is that they will need to know how to communicate well, think for themselves, work as a team, know how to lead, and how to learn. Montessori teachers work alongside students, guiding them as they rise to their potential at every stage.



How to Encourage Your Children to Develop Healthy Eating Habits

By Heather White

Parents play an important role in encouraging their children to make healthy choices and in the midst of today's hectic lifestyles, eating well can be challenging.

Whether you have a toddler or a teenager, here are some helpful tips to encourage your children to develop healthy eating habits:



Focus on the joy of food.

Try to reframe your mindset around food, embracing the enjoyment of a wide variety of foods to help you and your child develop a healthy relationship with food. Focus on balance, positivity, and joy.

Help your child listen to their body.

Most children will naturally eat the amount of food their bodies need. Instead of asking your child to "take just one more bite," look at other signs such as a child's energy, ability to focus, endurance, and mood stability to ensure they're eating adequately.

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Demonstrate healthy eating habits.

Eating together is linked to many positive health outcomes. It provides you the opportunity to discuss different types of foods, to connect to one another, and to be a role model.

Keep your child hydrated.

Encourage children to drink plenty of water in unique ways such as by introducing a fun and cute water bottle or by adding fruit.

Involve your child in grocery shopping and meal prep.

Invite your child to help you plan meals, shop for ingredients, and prepare meals. When they are actively involved in choosing and preparing meals, they may be more likely to try new foods.



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