

# Montessori Schools of Central Texas Newsletter

November 2021

Dr. Jerry O'Donnell – Headmaster  
Mrs. Jennifer Watson – Director

## News from the Top

*This article is of such importance that we are going to share it in a series. It is a lengthy instruction on the two different mindsets. It is a helpful tool in order to foster growth mindset in the classrooms and at home.*



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### Upcoming Events

November 2021

11/11	Veteran's Day – <b>SCHOOL CLOSED</b>
11/12	Elem Field Trip
11/16	Picture Day Toddler & Elementary
11/17	Picture Day Primary 11/19
11/19	Thanksgiving Celebration @ 11am (Elementary, Primary, Toddlers) <b>EARLY DISMISSAL @ 12:30 PM</b>
11/22-26	Thanksgiving Break <b>SCHOOL CLOSED</b>

## Fixed vs. Growth: The Two Basic Mindsets That Shape Our Lives (Part 2)

By Maria Popova  
Edited by Heather Schaefer

We will continue our article about the research which was done by Dr. Carol Dweck on the two different mindsets: fixed and growth. A fixed mindset is characterized by a fear of failure, striving to succeed in areas of familiarity, and desiring to be viewed as smart or talented. A growth mindset is characterized by being unafraid of failure, a hunger for continuous learning and growth, and a desire to be viewed as a hard worker.

In the Montessori classroom, our goal is to foster independence. Developing a growth mindset is a crucial factor in order to increase self-confidence as a child grows. A child that trusts themselves and has greater self-confidence, is more likely to be successfully independent. As we develop the whole child in the Montessori classroom, we want to develop a growth mindset in order to encourage the self-confidence and ultimate independence.

As you begin to understand the fixed and growth mindsets, you will see exactly how one thing leads to another. In one world — the world of fixed traits — success is about proving that you're smart or talented and validating yourself. In the other — the world of changing qualities — it's about stretching yourself to learn something new and developing your whole self. In one world, effort is a bad thing. It, like failure, means you're not smart or talented. If you were, you wouldn't need effort. In the other world, effort is what makes you smart or talented.

Dr. Carol Dweck's most remarkable research has explored how these mindsets are born — they form very early in life. In one seminal study, Dweck and her colleagues offered four-year-olds a choice: They could either redo an easy jigsaw puzzle or try a harder one. Even these young children conformed to the characteristics of one of the two mindsets. Those with "fixed" mentality stayed on the safe side, choosing the easier puzzles that would affirm their existing ability, articulating to the researchers their belief that smart kids don't make mistakes. Those with the "growth" mindset thought it an odd choice to begin with, perplexed why anyone would want to do the same puzzle over and over if they aren't learning anything new.

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## Infant 1

October was a great month filled with many learning activities. As we move into November, we are looking forward to the changing weather and the Thanksgiving holiday. We also hope to continue outdoor exploration. As the children seem to be getting familiar with their environment, we will continue building a strong bond of trust and acceptance with each of them.

Sensorial activities, like sensory bags and corn exploration, will be introduced this month. For language, we will focus on brown objects and identifying various shapes. Lessons on the turkey will be presented and many new words like "thank you" and "please" in English, Spanish, and ASL, will be added to their vocabulary. The children just love learning new ASL signs, listening to songs, and engaging with music bells and shakers.

The Infant 1 team is so happy for the opportunity to educate and nurture your child!

- Mrs. Tammy Clausen

## Infant 2

November is here and so are cooler temperatures. Please ensure that your child has a few (weather appropriate) extra sets of clothing options. If you want to leave a small sweater or jacket, because there may be a slight chill in the air when we go out in the morning, please do so.

One of the fundamental aspects of Montessori philosophy is living a discerning, harmonious, and purposeful existence. To do this one must teach and express gratitude. During the month of November, we will continue to guide and practice this philosophy and strengthen the children's understanding of being thankful. If your child has any favorite books on the topic, they may bring it in to share during our circle time. In addition to being thankful we will have a few discussions and lessons on corn. We will strengthen our fine motor skills by shucking ears of corn. Using corn as a medium, we will design different pieces of art and create little shakers to add to our musical instrument collection. The children are going to also get a little adventurous and try to germinate using the corn kernels.

- Ms. Candice Stevens

## Toddlers I & II

November will be a month filled with many fun and educational activities. During our large group lessons, the toddler classes will be discovering the life cycle of turkeys, Native Americans, Pilgrims, and we will teach and then practice gratitude.

As the weather grows colder, the toddler students will learn how to put on their own sweaters and jackets to build more independence. During our small group lessons, the children will spoon cranberries to refine their fine motor skills to prepare their hands for handwriting. We will shuck corn, and create many Thanksgiving arts and crafts this month, to include Native American Chief hats, ice cream cone teepees, and paint Pilgrim hats using dots.

On the menu this month, the children will enjoy the fruits of their labor from shucking fresh corn and will be treated to steamed corn and homemade corn bread. While outside, the toddler students will practice walking on a straight line to build balance and coordination. We will also continue to tend our fall gardens and hope to harvest some nutritious vegetables soon.

- Mrs. LaDonna Ronelus & Ms. Yesenia Armas

## Primary 1 & 2

We have a lot of exciting lessons in store for the month of November. The students will wrap up their study of our solar system with a focus on Saturn and Neptune. Next, we will delve into the layers of our Earth and move into rock classification and volcanoes. For social graces and courtesies, the students will be taught how to care for books, proper usage and placement of a napkin, table setting, and dining etiquette. Cooking lessons will be spiced pumpkin muffins, a dessert for our Thanksgiving celebration, and *pan de bono*, a Columbian dish, to tie into our study of South America. For our Bible lessons, the students will hear the stories of A Baby in a Basket, The Burning Bush, and The Ten Plagues. Lastly, the primary students will be able to define an isthmus and strait, compare the size of planets, learn weather patterns, and classify plants and animals. We also look forward to honoring our Veterans this month.

- Mrs. Carmen Alvarado & Mrs. Veronica Prudencio

## Lower Elementary

For the month of November, we will shift gears studying our first President, George Washington. In geography, we will focus on the South American continent, learning the culture, countries, flags, and capitals. Our Botany studies will center on roots to learn the parts and the types of roots, and root adaptation.

In Bible, we will read about *Prophet's Show the Way*, *Mary's House*, *Elizabeth's House*, and *Mary and Joseph*. In Zoology, the children will learn the parts of a fish and also research different species. Our Physical Science experiments will encompass states of matter and the water cycle. We will also introduce fractions in math and complete some verb lessons in language.

For history, the students will continue working on their personal family timeline and we will also learn about our first Thanksgiving. There will be plenty of Thanksgiving crafts also as we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving together at the end of the month.



- Mrs. Doline Abraham

## Notes from Mrs. Watson:

1. Picture days are fast approaching. On Tuesday, November 16th, all toddler students (both classes) and the Elementary will take pictures. On Wednesday, November 17th, the Primary students will be photographed. Please send your child to school in the outfit that you would like them to have their picture taken in. Proofs will be made available digitally and may be ordered through November 29th to ensure delivery prior to the Christmas break. More details will follow after picture days as to how to view your child's pictures. There is no obligation to buy any photos.
2. Our annual Thanksgiving Celebration for Elementary, Primary, and Toddler students and parents will be at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, November 19th. A sign-up sheet will be made available for items needed to make our celebration a great success! This celebration is open to parents and students enrolled, but not to extended families due to space and food preparation planning. We wish you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving!
3. The American Legion Hall across the street has re-opened their parking lot for drive through traffic. This organization has always been kind to our school, offering to allow our parents to use their parking lot to travel through since we are on a dead-end street. They only have one request, which is an important request because the Commander has told me on a few occasions that they will close it down to our parent body if this rule is not followed. Please do NOT drive by their dumpster, but rather use the other exits.

- Mrs. Jennifer Watson



Happy  
Birthday



- |                     |            |                           |         |
|---------------------|------------|---------------------------|---------|
| ▪ Leah Ellis        | Infant 2   | November 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 2 Years |
| ▪ Rosemary Schaefer | Primary 2  | November 4 <sup>th</sup>  | 4 Years |
| ▪ Avery Brakeman    | Infant 2   | November 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 2 Years |
| ▪ Etta Thiel        | Toddler 2  | November 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 2 Years |
| ▪ Vivienne Thiel    | Toddler 1  | November 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 2 Years |
| ▪ Julian Preciado   | Toddler 1  | November 11 <sup>th</sup> | 2 Years |
| ▪ Madelyn Tisdale   | Toddler 1  | November 12 <sup>th</sup> | 2 Years |
| ▪ Knox Sparkes      | Toddler 2  | November 12 <sup>th</sup> | 3 Years |
| ▪ Henry Samfield    | Primary 1  | November 15 <sup>th</sup> | 5 Years |
| ▪ Amara Johnson     | Toddler 2  | November 16 <sup>th</sup> | 3 Years |
| ▪ Siyona Naik       | Primary 1  | November 18 <sup>th</sup> | 5 Years |
| ▪ Isaac Segovia     | Toddler 2  | November 18 <sup>th</sup> | 3 Years |
| ▪ Aiden Stewart     | Elementary | November 21 <sup>st</sup> | 9 Years |
| ▪ Zoe Clark         | Toddler 2  | November 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 Years |
| ▪ Paxton Pehl       | Primary 2  | November 23 <sup>rd</sup> | 6 Years |



## Elementary Christmas Service Project

The holiday season is fast approaching! The Elementary Class are doing a service project for Christmas this year. We would like to ask for help and donations in order to make this project successful.

We will send Christmas Stockings to deployed service members who will be arriving at their 9-month deployment post between Thanksgiving and Christmas. We want to bless their holiday season with stockings filled with useful things, handmade cards, and a heartfelt touch for these service members.

The Primary and Elementary classes will help sew the stockings. The rest of the students will make cards for each stocking. Everybody is invited to donate items! We ask that all items be submitted by **Dec 1<sup>st</sup>**.

Listed here are the items we would like to donate. If you can find it in your heart to help with this project, we appreciate it. Please bring all donations to the front office. Thank you!

Mini Hand Sanitizers		Beef Jerky	
Tissue packs		Cookies	
Lip balm		Crackers	
Hand Warmers		Chips	
Christmas Scent		Airborne	

## Veterans Day



We thank all of our Veterans who have ever served in the armed services! Here are some facts about the holiday.

Veterans Day is always observed on November 11th with speeches, parades, and church services across the United States and in many places the American flag is hung at half-mast. A period of silence lasting two minutes may be held at 11am.

Major hostilities of World War I were formally ended at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 when the Armistice with Germany went into effect. When the holiday first began, it had a different name, which was Armistice Day. Congress amended the bill in 1954, replacing "Armistice" with "Veterans," and it has been known as Veterans Day since.

## Contact Us

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From that study with the 4-year-olds, it was clear that the fixed-mindset kids wanted to make sure they succeeded in order to seem smart, whereas the growth-mindset ones wanted to stretch themselves, for their definition of success was about becoming smarter.

Dweck quotes one seventh-grade girl, who captured the difference beautifully:

“I think intelligence is something you have to work for ... it isn't just given to you.... Most kids, if they're not sure of an answer, will not raise their hand to answer the question. But what I usually do is raise my hand, because if I'm wrong, then my mistake will be corrected. Or I will raise my hand and say, 'How would this be solved?' or 'I don't get this. Can you help me?' Just by doing that I'm increasing my intelligence.”

These findings are especially important in education and how we, as a culture, assess intelligence. If we understand the growth mindset and how to encourage that way of thinking, then we can help students become more engaged learners and intrinsically motivated. This means that students are not waiting for praise at the end of a task, they are instead motivated inwardly just by the challenge of learning. In the Montessori environment, we encourage students to feel proud of their own work rather than asking us to be proud for them or asking teachers and parents for praise.

In another study of hundreds of students, mostly adolescents, Dweck and her colleagues gave each student ten fairly challenging problems from a nonverbal IQ test, then praised the student for his or her performance — most had done well. But they offered two types of praise: Some students were told “Wow, you got [X many] right. That's a really good score. You must be smart at this,” while others, “Wow, you got [X many] right. That's a really good score. You must have worked really hard.” In other words, some were praised for ability and others for effort. The findings, at this point, are unsurprising yet jarring. The “ability praise” pushed students right into the fixed mindset, and they showed all the signs of it, too. When given a choice, they rejected a challenging new task that they could learn from. They didn't want to do anything that could expose their flaws and call into question their talent. In contrast, when students were praised for effort, 90 percent of them wanted the challenging new task that they could learn from. The most interesting part, however, is what happened next: Dweck and her colleagues gave the students a subsequent set of harder problems, on which the students didn't do so well. Suddenly, the ability-praised kids thought they weren't so smart or gifted after all. Dweck puts it poignantly:

“If success had meant they were intelligent, then less-than-success meant they were deficient.”

For this reason, we as parents and teachers need to show our next generation that intelligence is not a good measurement for success. We can praise students for their effort rather than their results. We can encourage challenging tasks and enjoy them no matter the outcome. One of the biggest tasks, however, is we need to be a good model of how to handle challenges and failures. As such, we can help the next generation of leaders become more successful.