

Montessori Schools of Central Texas Newsletter

April 2021
Volume 10, Issue 9

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Contents

News from the Top	1
Upcoming Events	1
Classroom News	2-3
Student in Action	4
Birthday Celebrations	5
Contact Information	5
News, Continued	6

Upcoming Events

April 2021

4/2	Good Friday School Closed
4/26-28	Hearing & Vision Screens

News from the Top

Learning the Language of Life

Montessori Children Handle Big Words and Big Ideas

As a parent I was surprised about the words my children knew and used correctly. We've experienced them going from crying to making sounds, from sounds to their first words (mama, dada), from words to phrases (me go) to sentences - "I want candy." It seems like a long (and sometimes frustrating) process for both children and adults to begin to communicate. We can't wait for them to start talking and then ironically, we spend a lot of time telling them to be quiet.

The beginning formation of their language skills is "ice bergian." Ninety percent of what they know supports the ten percent that is audible. The structure of their language has been constructed by and large with little direct input. They have been sorting out the complexity of words and phrases. They don't yet possess all the building tools to communicate to the world they inhabit. That is why at an early age two phrases dominate their conversation - "Why?" and "What's that?" They are continually constructing and they need solid linguistic materials to build with.

Baby talk is sweet but does not contribute to linguistic development or communications. At an early age, at least by three if not sooner, children are ready (and capable) of big words and big ideas. A Montessori education builds on this sensitive period for language and learning by introducing advanced concepts. Parents are often amazed that their child can say "equilateral triangle" let alone know what it means. But is an equilateral triangle any more complex linguistically than Elizabeth Washington?

A Montessori classroom is constantly introducing new concepts and constructs and a major part of this introduction is linguistic. It does little good to point out squares or circles unless you can call them by name, define them and find them again. Montessori education is noted for its "Three Period Lesson." First, you present the article. "This is red." "This is blue." Second, you ask, "Can you touch the red?" "Can you touch the blue?" (You see if they have understood

blue?" (You see if they have understood the vocabulary.) Third, you ask, "What is this?" They answer "red." "What is this?" They answer "blue." (You see if they have mastered the vocabulary and the concept.)

Language starts with the concrete - mama, doggie, cat and proceeds to action - "me go, I jump." And then it begins to add the color of adjectives - tall, short, biggest, smallest (all demonstrated in the classroom) until language blooms into conversation, (Continued Page 6)

Infant 1 – Mrs. Badger

Spring is here which means more trips to the garden. The children enjoy being outdoors and use their senses to explore the various textures, sights and sounds. This is also a great opportunity to introduce new vocabulary. We talk about the birds fluttering about, the colors of the flowers, the cool breeze, the trees, vegetables sprouting in the garden, and on occasion, a bushy-tailed squirrel stops by for a visit. Each time we travel to the garden, we find treasures to bring back to our classroom for an enhanced discussion and for memory retention.

In April we will be reviewing the three primary colors: red, yellow, and blue. The students will also be introduced to object sorting for visual discrimination and language development. Our treasure basket for this month will hold various articles of clothing for naming each piece in English and Spanish. In addition, the students will be comparing rough and smooth texture tablets for sensorial experiences, adding descriptive words to their vocabulary.

As the weather warms up, please remember to exchange your child's clothing for cooler outfits.

Mrs. Victoria Badger

Infant 2 – Ms. Gray

During the month of April, the children of the Infant 2 class will be learning to name colors in Spanish and practice the appropriate sign for each. If you would like to reiterate this lesson with your child at home, here are the new vocabulary words: purple/morado, yellow/amarillo, orange/anaranjado, and pink/rosa.

Also this month, the children will study many different species of insects (insectos). They will learn the names of bugs, what they eat, where they live, ones that fly versus those that crawl, identify their three body parts, three pairs of legs, and two antennae. Other Spring topics will focus on our weather conditions and the blooming plants in our environment. The students will continue tending to their gardens, watering their flowers and herbs. Our large group lesson will be centered on the Easter story. For art projects, the children will explore painting with faux insects and make rainbows.

Ms. Rosa Gray

Toddler 1 & 2 – Mrs. Ronelus & Ms. Armas

This month, our large group lessons will be about the Easter story and the resurrection of Christ. Also, the toddler students will learn about the life cycles of frogs and turtles. We will discuss the cause of Spring weather conditions, and have further discussions on rain, clouds, rainbows, the cooler mornings that turn into beautiful sunshine-filled afternoons. For Math, the students will concentrate on the numbers 6-10, using turtles and eggs while counting. For Science, we will sort living and non-living objects. During handwriting, the students will practice making straight lines and circles. We have many fun Art projects this month, including handprint frogs, potato masher turtles, and creative finger painting. For Food Preparation, the students will make cream cheese sandwiches and carrot bread. While outdoors, the toddlers will go on a scavenger hunt to enjoy nature.

---Mrs. LaDonna Ronelus & Ms. Yesenia Armas

Primary 1 & 2 – Mrs. Prudencio, Mrs. Alvarado, & Ms. Prudencio

Our continental study in April will be Australia and the primary students will study the anatomy of Koala bears and kangaroos, as well as, make Aussie Yo Yo biscuits, Aboriginal art, and work with the Australian puzzle map and cultural folder to learn more about the people, customs, and animals that live down-under. For our Social Graces and Courtesy lessons, the students will practice conflict resolution and waiting your turn to speak when others are in conversation. In reverence of Easter, the primary students will host a play for the other students on campus, re-telling of the resurrection of Christ. They will also make empty tomb crescent rolls and hear the Easter story from the Bible. Our featured composer this month will be Claude Monet and the students will create their own version of Water Lilies. Douglas Cowling will be our featured composer for music appreciation. The Science lessons will focus upon our human bodies, learning our anatomy and identifying bones in our skeletal system. In Spanish, the vocabulary will center around the continents (los continents).

Later this month, we will switch gears in appreciation of our great state of Texas. The students will recognize neighboring states, our flag and seal, as well as symbols; such as, our state flower (Bluebonnet), tree (Pecan), sport (rodeo), reptile (horned lizard), insect (Monarch butterfly), and large mammal (Texas Longhorn). We will also cook a Texas classic, chili.

---Mrs. Veronica Prudencio, Mrs. Carmen Alvarado, & Ms. Katherine Prudencio

Elementary – Mrs. Abraham

Our Botany study, during the month of April, will be on the parts of a seed, diagramming a bean seed and corn seed, germination and dispersal. In addition, the elementary students will continue to tend to their gardens outdoors with our Master Gardener on Thursdays. Research will be done from the Bible on Jesus' Last Passover, Jesus is Risen and Ascension. In Physical Science, we will study the movements of the Earth and its consequences, which causes day to turn to night and summer to turn to winter, our daily weather, and affects of wind direction, temperature, ocean currents, and precipitation. Another Science topic this month will be the identification of human anatomy. In Math, we will learn geometric solids, angles, checkerboard design, measurements, and the study of figures. For Geography, Australia will be our continental focus, learning the three countries, their flags, capitals and an in-depth cultural study into the people, customs, diets, and animals indigenous to this part of the world. Prepositions and conjunctions will be our Language concentration and the fundamental needs of man, tenses and history, with research of the clock of eras will be for History lessons. ~Mrs. Dolline Abraham

Notes from Mrs. Watson:

April 26th-28th, children age 4 by September 1, 2020, will undergo required hearing and vision screens. As a parent, you do not need to anything other than have your child present for those three days. These tests are important to help determine if your child's vision and hearing falls within the normal range for their age and if further diagnostic testing is needed by a physician. You will receive notification once these tests have been completed.

The most common misconception is that young children see at the desired 20/20 range; however eyes are not fully developed until the age of eight, typically. At age 4, children pass with 20/40 vision, unless there is a two line difference between each eye. At age 5 and above, the state considers passing at the 20/30 line.

Also, I have found in the past that the few children who have failed the initial hearing test, will pass with a re-screen a couple weeks later because they were congested which affected their ability to hear during the first screen.

In my experience, these tests have proven beneficial because children will often over-compensate to see which can mask vision problem. Catching hearing and vision problems early can have a positive impact on your child's health and general ability to thrive.

~~Mrs. Jennifer Watson



For more pictures, please visit our Parent Portal on our website. If you need the password, please email Mrs. Watson.

Next week, the Primary Easter play and photos from this special performance will be available on the Parent Portal, as well.



The soldiers who benefitted from the Elementary Community Service project came back to thank our students. They saluted the American and Christian flags in full ceremony. This patriotic moment was a treasured moment for our students.

God bless our military!

Birthdays



- Hattie Hernandez Primary 1 April 3rd 4 Years
- Isaac Schaefer Primary 1 April 8th 5 Years
- Hadley Hutchison Infant 1 April 11th 1 Year
- Braden Parish Primary 2 April 13th 5 Years
- Grace Martin Elementary April 14th 7 Years
- Finnegan Delaney Infant 2 April 18th 2 Years
- Spencer Isdale Primary 2 April 22nd 4 Years
- Oliver Ruan Infant 1 April 29th 1 Year
- Jack Fleenor Primary 2 April 30th 4 Years

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***Article continued from page one.

discussion (and debate.)

When our son started Montessori at 17 months we wanted to be good Montessori parents by offering him choices he could make. Every day for breakfast we held up two boxes of cereal and asked, "Do you want this or that?" Cereal, thereafter, became known as "dis and dat." (In hindsight, we should have been correct and named the cereals for him - but it would have ruined a good story!)

It is important that we correctly name the words and actions of their lives. A Montessori classroom is constantly adding vocabulary to a child's linguistic development. Studies have indicated that extensive vocabularies are a hallmark of successful adults. This process and habit of vocabulary acquisition is a foundational concept of your child's Montessori experience.

While we do use body language and facial gestures, oral language is the predominant means of communication. Helping your child communicate clearly their needs, desires, frustrations, etc helps them to move on to the more complex use of language and culture - the ability to define (and embrace) intangible concepts like love, hope and faith. Ironically, (and I don't know how it comes about) the first intangible concept they latch on to is wrapped up in the words, "It's not fair." But it is from there that justice, respect, duty, honor, honesty, loyalty begin to form with the child and are defined.

One of Montessori education's great gifts to your child is the emphasis and focus on observation. Your child is given training and time to become an observer. As has been said, "You can see a lot if you just look." The materials and exercises of the classroom are designed to aid your child during these earliest formative years to develop the habit of not only observing but of naming and defining the experience.

It is never just the accumulation of knowledge (or vocabulary) but the ability to use that knowledge to think, to communicate and to formulate the actions that are necessary for success. The more you talk with your child the more you develop the communication skills your child needs to succeed in the world.

--- Edward Fidellow, Montessorian

