

Montessori Pathways' News

Montessori Pathways

The best way to discovery!



School

February

“Success in life depends in every case on self-confidence and the knowledge of one’s own capacity “

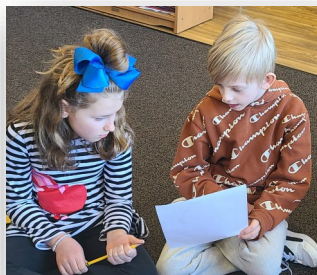
~ Maria Montessori, “From Childhood to Adolescence”

Notes from Ms. Alena
(Head of School)

Montessori and the Real Building of Self-esteem.

Montessori education has been building self-esteem for over a hundred years long before it became a popular buzzword and a psychological “distortion” of reality. All the trappings of the modern self-esteem movement – participation trophies, not letting children fail, everyone’s outcome is equal – have no place in Montessori or the reality of the world.

Practical life in Montessori is the foundation of all this reality that is to come. Every practical life exercise has a beginning, a process and an ending – just like successful life. But there is something in this process that is so simple yet dynamic – the child builds and feels a sense of power, control, and accomplishment. It is these early experiences, these early real successes that become the foundation for all the success that is to come. This self-esteem is internalized and does not come from outside, from what people tell you but it wells up from within. It comes with the beginning of concentration and self-control (which is the biggest challenge of life – and a great giver of self-esteem.)

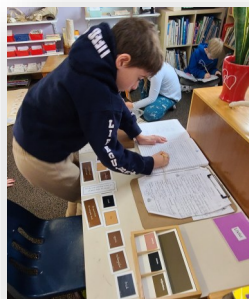


True self-esteem is an approval that comes from within. It is not about pleasing people or being validated from outside. That is why grades, awards, and punishments are not motivating factors in a Montessori environment.

Ironically, self-esteem built in Montessori is not self-centered. The lack of outward competition (for grades and prizes) creates

an attitude of family and community where we help each other to succeed, which also affects how we feel about ourselves. The real self-esteem of Montessori comes from the continuing sense of accomplishment and of mastery as the student faces greater challenges and complexity in life.

Since making mistakes is part of the Montessori learning process making mistakes does not undermine a child’s sense of self-esteem nor does the child crater when faced with “failure”. Montessori children learn to pick up the pieces and get back in the game. The game of life does not have four quarters, nine innings, eighteen holes or two halves. It is a continually evolving game as you learn new strategies, techniques, gain new information, practice new skills and begin to recognize the patterns of life that lead to success.



Montessori children learn firsthand that actions have consequences, that success is spelled w-o-r-k, and that some of the biggest rewards of life are just personal and do not require anyone else’s acknowledgment or affirmation. And that doing the right thing for the right reason is an amazing accomplishment all its own - an amazing adult lesson learned very young.



Self-esteem is “practiced” every day in a Montessori environment. Try – and try again until you reach your goal. Montessori children don’t wait for an adult’s approval because they learn early that it is their effort that achieves success. And every goal that they achieve – on their own - builds that unique amazing sense of accomplishment and self-esteem.





Parents' Corner



What is the next step for my child?

- ◇ Are a couple of years of Montessori good enough for my child to reap the benefits?
- ◇ Will Montessori prepare children for traditional school?
- ◇ Why should I pay tuition for one more year in Kindergarten if it is free in public school?
- ◇ How are Elementary years in Montessori beneficial for my child?
- ◇ Isn't it time for my child to join his/her friends from the neighborhood in going to public school together?

These and many others are questions parents ask every year when it is time to decide about the next step in their child's education and development.

Just like all of us do extensive research before buying a new car or a house, we recommend to our parents to do the same regarding their child's future - learn as much as possible about the different types of education and choose what is most beneficial for your child.

As a part of this research, we decided to share some of our resources with you regarding the benefits of Montessori Education in the different stages of the child's development.

Montessori Preschool Year is a time for planting...
Montessori Pre-K Year is a time for growing...
The Kindergarten Year in Montessori...
...is a time for blooming!

Click here for videos:

[Montessori Kindergarten: Essential & Empowering](#)
[A Time To Blossom - Montessori For The Kindergarten Year](#)
[The Montessori Kindergarten Year - A Question for Parents](#)



Montessori Elementary Program Develops Unique, Sensitive Individuals.

Children of the Elementary age are striving for intellectual independence and trying to satisfy their curiosity and excitement for learning. The Montessori classroom allows them to do just that. Rather than taking a step back to the basics and waiting for their peers to catch up, students of the Montessori class are able to progress at their own pace, discovering the world around them and focusing their varying interests appropriately.

What sets Montessori apart in the Elementary years—ages 6 – 12—is the individually paced curriculum that challenges children academically and safeguards their well-being and sense of self.

Click here for videos:

[Montessori: The Elementary Years](#)
[Structure with Choice in the Montessori Elementary Classroom](#)
[Montessori Mixed-age Classrooms](#)

Click here to learn more about Montessori Pathways:
[Kindergarten and Elementary Years at Montessori Pathways](#)

Click here to find more answers for your questions:
[Frequently Asked Questions about Montessori Education](#)





REGISTRATION FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR IS ALMOST OVER!



Thank you to all our families who returned their Re-Enrollment Applications on time. Our Elementary Class is full. We have a few spots for 3-year old children in our Primary program. So, if your family members or friends are looking for a great environment for a successful education, care, and development for their 3-year olds, please let them know that they are welcome to visit our school for more information. They simply need to contact Alena at montpathways@hotmail.com and schedule a school tour or send a brief request for more information through our [contact web page](#).

Reminder for returning families:

⇒ **The 10% annual tuition security deposit is due no later than April 15th.**

Your child is only considered a registered student with a guaranteed spot when the re-enrollment fee and 10% of annual tuition security deposit is paid in full.

If deposit is not paid by April 15th, your spot will be open for families from the wait list.

⇒ The tuition contract will reflect a 10% discount for the second child.

⇒ **The Summer Camp registration is almost over as well.**

We still can accept 3 more families on a first come, first serve basis. Simply return Summer Camp Application with \$30.00 early registration fee if you would like to enroll your child in our Summer Camp Program.

We are looking forward to spending another great year together!

IN MARCH:

- ◆ **March 3 — March 8 – Dr. Seuss Week**
- ◆ **March 20 (Th) at 2:00pm—Elementary Students Research Presentation (“Invertebrates”)**
- ◆ **March 20(Th) - 21(F) - Spring Primary Parent / Teacher Conference Days (East and South Rooms)**
- ⇒ **No School** for all Primary students on **Conference Day, Friday, March 21**
- ⇒ **The link to schedule** your in-person conference was already sent to all families. Please sign up for your conference if you have not done so yet.
- ◆ **March 24—March 28 – Spring Break (No School)**
- The school will be operating for All Day (6:45am—6:00pm) Primary students during Spring Break.
- ◆ **March 31 (M) - School Resumes**



Valentine's Day Celebration



Thank you so much to our amazing parents who helped with preparing and hosting our Valentine's Day parties in each classroom. You filled the children's day with fun, creativity, love, and happiness!



NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget, Ms. Carole

Happy Black History Month!

This month, we highlighted accomplishments of Black Americans. I invited all students to research at school or home, a person that they have heard of but wanted to know more. Ella, Elin, Zuzanna, Layla Kate and Bryce reported their research. On other days, I read from a book about notable black humans that was donated by the Sitar family. We also sang some songs that were pertinent: "Follow The Drinking Gourd" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing".

Our Valentine's gathering was filled with love: students were able to bring their favorite stuffie to share the day with them. They also brought Valentines to share. We also had free choice working where all students could create, color or write notes. Love is so integral into our day that this day was natural for all kids to show love and receive it.

All students have jobs in our class. Each child has this job for a couple of weeks and then all switch so that by the end of the year, students can do all the jobs. During February, we had many students out for various reasons, so the Support Role position is activated. Whoever is support, they substitute for the missing person. If the support person is missing, then I become support.

Natan, whose job was sweeping after lunch, noticed that both the dust pan person and the support were out so that would mean I had to be dust pan. I told him to let me know when he was finished so that I could do the job. I continued to supervise silent reading and people finishing their lunch and their jobs. When I turned back to Natan, he was done...with his job AND dustpan. THIS is what happens in Montessori classroom. Students take ownership and help when needed. Such a sweet gesture and lesson for all of us.

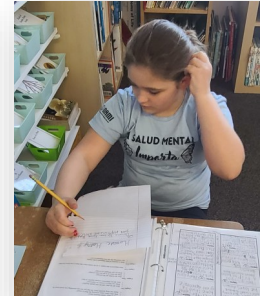
Elin, Ava, Maria and Zuzana noticed that one of their friends in our community was sad to be leaving on a trip with his parents. They asked if they could have a farewell party for this friend after school, since all of them are after care students. I agreed. They made cards, picked his favorite song to play, danced and celebrated with him. The student walked out feeling truly loved.

Have I mentioned recently how much I love my job?

Academics continue to improve. More students are taking responsibility for the work to be accomplished. Many are asking for more math lessons. All continue to love the stories and facts about our Earth, History and Physical Science.



All have chosen an invertebrate to research, checked books out from the library and have begun to take notes. It is their favorite work!



We began receiving our Kindergarten visitors. Some of the elementary students wrote a letter to their Kindergarten friend to welcome them to our class.



Then it was the elementary child's task to decide what work on the kindergarten workplan that he/she could accomplish with their kindergarten partner. It was nice to observe the patience and kindness of our elementary kids. Now every day we have kindergarteners looking at the list to see when is their day to visit!

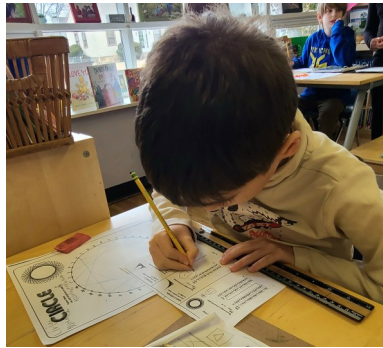
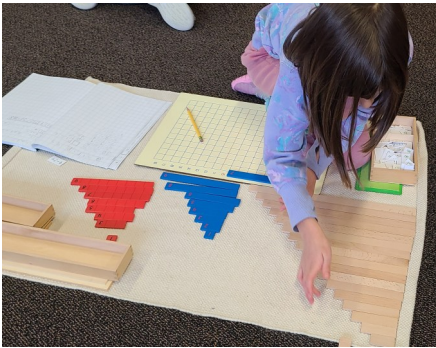


Snow!!! Finally, the students were able to play, build and explore the snow. On Friday, the 21st, we went to the parking lot and played on the big snow piles and the deep snow behind it. People dug, slid, jumped and relaxed in the snow. Lots of fun for all.



FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE PRE-K / KINDERGARTEN AFTERNOON GROUP



Ms. Masha, Ms. Kathy

The Pre-K and Kindergarten afternoon group has had additional time for creative exploration with the snow we (finally) had this month, followed by the polar vortex induced indoor recess.



From snow castles and snow cone stores outside, to pine cone snowy owls and model magic flowers, bedrooms, and strollers inside, we have been creatively adapting to whatever the weather throws at us!



During the work cycle, more and more students are eager to breakthrough in their reading journey, which is not always achieved by re-reading the same books. We often revisit building the words or consonant blends that are tricky with the moveable alphabet, which in turn helps the child blend these words in reading.



We switch to reading notes for a scavenger hunt or a game to take the pressure off. Or we go back to developing the physical coordination skills connected to reading, such as shoe tying. We have had some very exciting progress and several children ready for tying their sneakers come spring time!



You may have also heard of the new special interest for many of our students—animal classification. To rekindle an interest in the study of fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals, we had invited some of the children to become more creative with how they cut out their fish puzzle, for example. “What if we added some scales? Could we make it look like the ocean? What would that look like and what could we use?”



After the creative aspect is completed, this page of their Animal Classification Book needs some words – what could we write about fish? As more children became intrigued by the project, we are seeing the afternoon has been buzzing with students laying out their sentences using the moveable alphabet, carefully sounding out “most fish do not care for their young” or “amphibians are cold blooded.” This group will surely not question what sets an amphibian apart from a reptile when they’re older!



FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

Pre-K and Kindergarten Afternoon Group



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM



Ms. Kathy, Ms. Ellen

Another month has come and gone! We are moving into longer periods of daylight and the promise of warmer days to follow. Until then, please remember to send in hats, mittens and boots every day, and hope we can make it outside. Like January, February brought us a good deal of indoor recess time. The children and teachers are getting restless. We tried to accommodate the need for physical movement, by adding freeze dances and movement games to our inside time. A few favorite games are "Duck, Duck, Goose", "What time is Mr. Fox?", "The Fox and the Hound", "4 Corners" and "Museum Guard". If you are not sure what some of these games are, it would be a great conversation starter to have your child explain them.

February filled our room with pink, red and purple. The art area was a favorite spot for making Valentines, and heart crafts of all kinds. The children enjoyed making poking, cutting, and decorating hearts for their families and friends. Painting hearts with intricate patterns using a ruler and sharpie marker to divide the shape into smaller sections and carefully painting each with watercolors. The children are all perfecting cutting skills in all art areas.



A huge thank you to all our parents for donating items, time and energy to make our Valentines Party a huge success. Your generous and thoughtful donations created a fun filled, delicious and crafty day for all. We couldn't have made it happen without you!

In the classroom the children have been very busy within every area. Most of the new 4-year-old children are branching out into more challenging materials as they gain more confidence in their own abilities. "I can do big kid work!" was also heard frequently this month.

We have seen the most growth in Language. Language is all around us in our world and is used in many ways within the Montessori classroom. The unseen works (which never go home) learning, pre-reading skills such as patterning, opposites, rhyming words and things that go together such as a chicken and an egg, a baby and a crib or a toothbrush and toothpaste. All have a part in classification of our world and language development. Naming the various geometric shapes and geometric solids. Children develop vocabulary through the many "parts of" works, building vocabulary development in sciences, math, and geometry, everywhere in the classroom.

The students have been working with sounds at different independent levels. A few are still learning basic sounds with sandpaper letters and a sand tray. The sandpaper letters are unique, they help the child form "muscle memory" (think Karate Kid) of the shape of an individual letter while reciting the sound. The sand tray then allows the child to recreate the letter and erase/shake the tray if it is not exactly to their liking. The sand tray works much like a chalkboard but on a more tactile level, again reinforcing the feel of making each individual letter to be associated with a given sound/ letter. It is on the sandpaper letters that formation of a letter is introduced. Where to start each letter and whether a continuous movement is used or do you pick up your hand, to cross a "t" or dot an "i". Think of learning a foreign alphabet. Each letter must be remembered both visually, sounded out for its unique sound and then reproduced to create individual words.

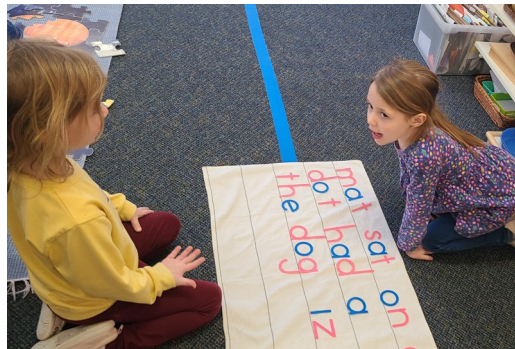
We teach the sound and NOT the name of the letter as a basis for beginning phonetic awareness which will lead to building words. The children are encouraged to phonetically write the sounds they hear first, by getting each individual sound from the moveable or pre-written alphabet and bringing one at a time to their rug or table to build an individual word one letter or sound at a time. The exposure of walking with and looking at each individual sounds reinforces the individual sound. This is where you as parents will see "interesting" words, very interesting. It is this process that builds each individual child's confidence in the ability to use written language, decode words and ultimately read them. Ask your child to read back to you what they have written and do not correct the spelling as spelling, it will naturally progress to a higher level through experience with reading and exposure to written words.

Other explorations this month have been animal classification with several students exploring classifications of animals Fish, Birds, Amphibians, Reptiles and Mammals. Operations in Math. How do we use each operation? It is an exciting time of year! Another burst will inevitably occur in March.



FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha Ms. Laxmi



The month of February brought some frigid weather outside but extra toasty love and friendship inside. The children were busy working together to decorate the room with origami hearts, marble painting hearts, heart trees, heart hedgehogs, hanging hearts and garlands! There was much excitement leading up to the Valentine's party and the day of. Thank you to all the parent volunteers who contributed their time and energy to making the day such a success! And thank you to the many families who have been donating sewing materials – the children have been very excited to add new details to their projects!

Although Valentine's Day excitement tends to be front of mind for everyone in February, we made sure to highlight Groundhog's Day and President's Day as well. Some of the children were surprised to hear that the groundhog sometimes doesn't see its shadow (how is this possible if I always see my shadow?) while others weren't very convinced that this tradition relates to the arrival of spring (can't blame them on this one). But we still enjoyed exploring the parts of the groundhog and creating cute groundhog day scenes in the art area.

President's Day brought the opportunity to take out some pennies for polishing! This was also a chance for some scientific exploration as the children combined salt and vinegar to polish and scrub the pennies with q-tips, noticing the importance of having enough salt for abrasion of the dirt and enough vinegar to remove the tarnish on the copper. We were then able to see Abe Lincoln on the front, and the Lincoln Memorial on the back, which led to a discussion of current and past presidents. As we flipped through a book showing pictures of the American presidents, we had some very creative observations and comments, including "They're all very old," "Are any of them alive?" and "We will have a girl president soon!"

With the extra cold weather this month, we added another opportunity for children to help feed the birds – grating bread-crumbs. They have been taking great care to cautiously hold the mini grater in one hand and the dried bread in the other to grate away and make breadcrumbs, bringing the filled bowl outside to empty into the feeder during recess. In turn, we have seen more birds (and squirrels, of course) visit our bird feeder!

The beauty of the Montessori environment is that it is continuously changing to fit the current needs of the children, so this month we have also added a few new ways for the children to decompress as the longer days inside from the cold made everyone more antsy. We have introduced a listening station using a Yoto Player (a screen free modern day CD player) and headphones.



There is a choice of various classical music composers, guided breathing exercises, short stories from around the world, and audiobooks of the Solar System book series that are on our shelves. We were very hopeful that the children would be able to uphold the boundaries that come with this work as the positive effects of listening to classical music on brain development have been widely studied and documented, and the addition of a few audio books provides for a quick but purposeful mental break when the child feels they need it. We are happy to report that our students have done beautifully with respecting the boundaries in place with this new material and we are excited to add more to the music curriculum in our room!

A simple yoga mat and a few yoga cards have also provided more space for whole body movement as children practice balancing, stretching, and coordinating their whole body to replicate the pictures. This practice is not only helping their physical strength but also preparing them for reading and writing.



The Montessori environment is set up with the child's whole-body development in mind because the body and mind are very directly connected. We are seeing more and more students enter the period of intense interest in literacy, continuously going back to the letters whose sounds they're trying to master, practicing writing them, or coming back with a book they just read a few moments ago to try one more time. To be successful in these endeavors, they need the accompanying physical strength and many are still working on developing this! That is why they sit at the edge of their rug, getting on all fours to reach across—activated core and arm strength. They're carrying (appropriately) heavy trays filled with "thousands" cubes or a bucket of water from hand washing or a chair across the room – a whole body workout of strength and coordination.

This same strength is needed to sit straight and write (yes, you need a strong core to write!) or to sit straight and read. Reading especially calls for the physical coordination of tracking and crossing the midline. Being able to track a ball to catch it or having the coordination to skip or even tie shoes are the same skills the body needs to track letters and words on a page and then cross from the end of the text on the right to the start of the line below it, on the left. You're doing it naturally as you read this text now, but it is an important skill that is directly tied to physical development!

And so it is important that, especially in these cold months, children have the time and space to be skipping, crawling, climbing, and moving their bodies purposefully at home as well. You can set up simple obstacle courses with household items such as crawling under a chair while pushing a ball with their nose (core, arms, and eye tracking), balance walking on an open jump rope on the floor while holding a stuffed animal above their head (balance and coordination), jumping over a pillow (whole body strength), weaving between stuffed animals (crossing the midline) or catching a ball (hand-eye coordination).

FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT PATHWAYS IN FEBRUARY



“There is a great sense of community within the Montessori classroom, where children of differing ages work together in an atmosphere of cooperation rather than competitiveness. There is respect for the environment and for the individuals within it, which comes through experience of freedom within the community.”
~ Maria Montessori

