

Montessori Pathways' News



What is Normalization? Montessori Perspectives

Normalization *"is the most important single result of our whole work."* ~Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*

Normalization is the term Montessori used to refer to children who are able to concentrate and work freely in the Montessori environment, exercising self-discipline and peace. It is in no way meant to suggest that children who are not able to do this are not normal. It simply means they are in a different stage of their development and personal journey.

Montessori said there were three stages each child goes through on the way to normalization.

The first stage is when children do something because they want to. This is typical behavior of toddlers and two year olds.

As the child matures, they move to stage two and do things when they are asked of them.

The third stage is when the child does something because they know it is the right thing to do.

Children who are normalized not only know the ground rules, they follow them because doing so leads to peace and harmony in their environment. They are patient with themselves and others. Normalized children are respectful of all things, living and non-living. They exercise self-control and self-discipline. In short, normalized children are independent which leads to greater learning.

"In the normalized child, his freedom to take an interest in all kinds of things, leads to his focusing his attention... on the knowledge he derives from them." - M. Montessori, *"The Absorbent Mind"*.

The Montessori environment is structured to lead the child naturally and gracefully through the stages of normalization. Normalization can neither be forced nor coerced. Each child is a unique individual with a unique timeframe of development. The Montessori materials were developed to help the child develop these necessary skills by presenting learning challenges incrementally. With repeated practice and built-in self-correction (also known as "control of error"), the child learns to develop his focus and concentration as well as developing a curiosity for what comes next. The Montessori teacher and parent is a gentle, loving presence who uses positive guidance and redirection to help the child acquire independence.



Elementary Parent Curriculum Night

In October, the Elementary and Kindergarten parents were invited to our Elementary Curriculum Night.

Ms. Bridget displayed some of the materials in different areas to show our parents how the Montessori multiage and hands-on environment helps our students be successful in and enjoy their learning process.

Thank you Ms. Bridget for such an informative evening and thank you, parents, for finding the time to participate in it!

Halloween at Montessori Pathways

We appreciate everyone's effort in preparing the **Halloween celebration** at our school. Some parents decorated their children's classrooms, many of you contributed a lot of items for the Halloween party, and some parents hosted the activity stations. It was such a busy, exciting, and, at the same time, peaceful morning at school.

The elementary friends planned and organized their party independently and enjoyed it on Friday, 28th. The hit of the Party was a Haunted House that they created in downstairs room. On 31st our elementary friends celebrated **the Day of Dead** remembering their family members and pets who are not with them anymore.



Parents' Corner



Practical Life: The Soul of the Montessori Classroom

"Any child who is self-sufficient, who can tie his shoes, dress or undress himself, reflects in his joy and sense of achievement the image of human dignity, which is derived from a sense of independence."

~ Maria Montessori, The Child in the Family

Children are naturally curious and want to participate in the activities of daily life they see all around them. Maria Montessori developed the Practical Life exercises to give children the opportunity to practice those skills, gain independence, and become fully functional members of their community.

Some parents, new to Montessori, keep asking us why their kids are doing all of this sweeping, mopping, dusting, polishing, scrubbing, washing, cooking, etc. while parents are expecting their kids are working on math and language.

It's important to educate parents about the crucial role that Practical Life exercises play in their child's social, emotional, and academic development, providing a foundation for confidence and success.

These activities help children develop their motor skills, refining both large and small muscle coordination. A child may repeat a particular exercise over and over, perfecting her movements and developing concentration. Pediatric neuropsychologist Steven Hughes found that children's strongest link to their brains are their hands, noting that repeated motor movements develop the pathways in the brain that help children learn.

The child is learning to follow a complex motor sequence, independently, in order to fulfill his or her own desires and needs. These skills, when taught early in life, allow children to believe in themselves as well as develop the self-discipline needed for success throughout their lives.

Math, reading, and language all require one to have the ability to focus, to be able to follow logical and sequential steps, to make intelligent choices, to see a task through from start to finish, to persist when one makes a mistake, and to correct one's mistakes—and all of these are present in the process of learning and practicing the practical life activities.

The Exercises

In the preliminary exercises, children learn basic life skills such as pouring, cutting, folding, and spooning. In the applied exercises, children learn how to care for themselves (hand washing, dressing and undressing,), as well as the environment (polishing furniture and washing their own snack/lunch dishes, for example).

The other two areas of the Practical Life curriculum are Grace and Courtesy, (which include asking for or offering help, letting someone pass, covering a sneeze or yawn; using "Thank you", "Please", "Excuse me", etc.), and Control of Movement, (carrying scissors, walking around a rug, the Silence Game, etc.).

Spontaneous Contributions

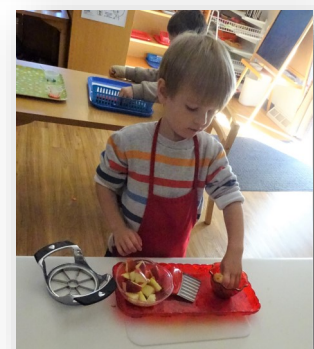
At first the child acts solely for himself, washing a table for the sake of doing the activity. Later he will wash a table because it is dirty. Eventually, what were once exercises become spontaneous and natural expressions of community life. Unprompted, children will often help each other mop up a spill or sweep the dirt from an overturned potted plant.

As his world expands, each child comes to realize that he is an important part of the community, someone with something to give. Children feel trusted and respected when adults provide them with the opportunity to take part in the real work of their family and school. Perhaps this is one reason why Margot Waltuch, who trained with Maria Montessori, said that "Practical Life is the soul of the Montessori classroom."

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[Click here to learn more: "How Cleaning and Sweeping Prepare Children for Academic Success"](#)

[Click here to see our kids' Practical Life activities](#)





COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS

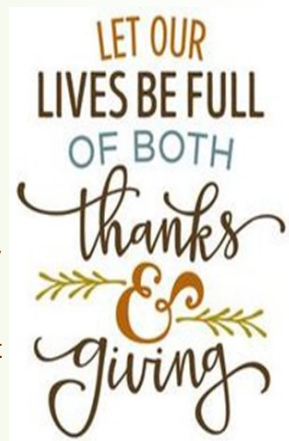
In November

- ◆ **November 1 (Tu) - Fall Picture Day at 9:00-10:30am**
- ◆ **November 3 (Th) at 6:00-7:00pm - Montessori Educational Night: "How Independence Leads to Achievements"- workshop for primary parents**
- ◆ **November 2 - November 9 – Giving with Gratitude Week** (Crystal Lake Community Harvest Food Drive)

As Thanksgiving approaches, we would like to teach our students not only the importance of giving thanks, but also the importance of giving. Therefore, every year, we participate in the **Annual Community Harvest**, which will benefit clients of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry.

We are asking that each family provide their child with a chance to select with their parents and purchase 5-10 items to bring as a donation to school any day from Wednesday, November 2 through Wednesday, November 9.

The donated items will be delivered to Crystal Lake Food Pantry (42 East St, Crystal Lake, IL 60014) **on Wednesday, November 9 at 10:00am.**



- ◆ **November 9 (W) at 2:00—3:00pm - Kindergarten and Elementary Class Trip to Crystal Lake Food Pantry for a tour.**
- ◆ **November 11 (F) - No School – Veteran Day / Teacher Institute Day**
- ◆ **November 24- 25 (Th- F) – No School (Thanksgiving break)**

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NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget

October has been a month of excitement. Students are now comfortable with the environment and have made new connections with friends. Older students offer help to younger classmates and younger ones easily ask the older student now in the class. It is at this time every year that the Montessori classroom is normalized and a busy hive of activity. I am able to observe work habits, behaviors and abilities of all students much better.

The specials classes add a little seasoning to the mix. Art is still a favorite. This month our students were working on a 'Pumpkin' project using oil pastels and 'Day of Dead Sugar Skull' clay project.



Throwing, catching and kicking are PE skills we have been exploring.

The sciences and cultural subjects are always the first work to be accomplished. Immediately after an animated presentation in story format, students eagerly desire to do the follow up work. For older students, they are able to choose how they demonstrate their new knowledge. Leaves, fish, skeletons, atoms, periodic table, evaporation, continents, the sun and Earth study are all exciting adventures for them.



Spanish has been game based and I often hear students say gracias instead of thank you. We will begin recorders soon so make sure that you have your music ears ready!

Finally, the kids have been planning and preparing for the Halloween party. The sixth-grade students are heading the committees- games, food and decorations. Every child is on a committee to plan the party. On the day of the party, the committees of students set up and cleaned up. After, we discussed what was liked about the party and what we will improve on for the next party.

Many are asking for more math and grammar lessons and the reading groups are finishing their 2nd month of book groups.

It has been a fun and active month.



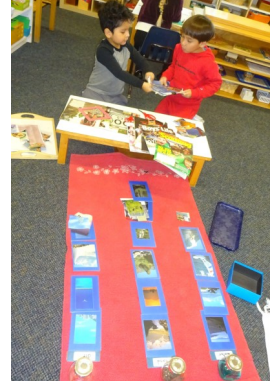
OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

Pre-K and Kindergarten Extended Day Group



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



Another month has come and gone. October brought us fall colors, apples, and pumpkins not to mention everyone's favorite, Halloween. The children have enjoyed these themes in most areas of the classroom.

We began the month talking about parts of the pumpkin and the life cycle of a pumpkin. The children enjoyed making their own parts of a Pumpkin on craft paper.



In the math area the children counted acorns and stamped to make counting graphs or booklets from 1- 5 or 1-10.

The change in the weather brought talk of the seasons and what the four seasons are. The children have enjoyed sequencing the seasons and making books of various tree formations for each season. We have been singing songs about autumn leaves, squirrels, and nuts. Adding our Halloween favorites for extra fun.



Fall is a great time to explore sensorially. The Sensorial area of the classroom offers exploration of the senses, sight, touch, taste, smell, and auditory senses. Sensorial is learning through discrimination of the senses. Maria Montessori designed the materials to help children classify, clarify, and understand the world around them. She observed that from birth children learn through their senses touching and manipulating the world around them. This area of the classroom sets the foundation for learning in the other areas.



These explorations develop nerve connections stimulating the senses and heighten memory. Various qualities of each material are isolated, the Pink Tower is big to small, the Brown Stair is thick to thin, the Red Rods are short to long etc. In each of the subcategories in the Sensorial area, the materials prepare the child for Math, Language, Geometry and writing as well.

To an adult the Pink Tower looks simple. To the younger children it is complex and many of the middle qualities of size are not easily discriminated. The youngest children often build an uneven tower with smaller cubes placed in the middle. The tower topples and the child tries again, or an older child will help to rebuild it. The child repeats the activity and repeats it until finally they master it.



A few of our Kindergarten children recently discovered the Pink Tower resembles the cubes of numbers 1-10. This simplistic material is built with ten cubes of 1 cm – 10 cm. It is the same as the cubes for the numerals 1- 10 which the kindergarten children were exploring. It sets the foundation for more advanced math work. This is the true beauty of the Montessori materials; they are fluid and cumulative. The three-year-old is build a foundation on which he will discover the squares and cubes of numbers from the strong exposure to the extremely basic Sensorial materials. Sensorial also encompasses classification of sound by matching pitches and grading from loudest to softest, matching colors and the textures of touch tablets, various weights of wood using the baric tablets. Sensorial is an exciting and developmentally necessary part of the Montessori classroom. There is so much to explore in the Sensorial area of the classroom. Research it and you will be amazed!

Please, Continue Grace and Courtesy lessons at home. Your child should be waiting for you to finish speaking before talking. A gentle reminder, such as what do we do when someone is talking or how do we wait would be beneficial to all of us. We are getting so much better but need a little more practice.

Thanks to all for attending our fall conferences. It is wonderful to share your child's progress with you.

Thanks to everyone for volunteering and making our Halloween party so spooktacular!



OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Joey, Ms. Carole



We are all really enjoying the cooler days and beautiful colors of fall. As the months change, so do our works in the classroom. We go from parts of the apple, and life cycle of the apple, to the parts of the pumpkin and life cycle of the pumpkin; from parts of the honeybee, to parts of the spider, bat and skeleton.



In the science area we are also focusing on the leaf and how the tree uses chlorophyll and the process of photosynthesis. The children have had fun leaf rubbing and naming the different types leaves and their trees, and how to identify characteristics by classifying, lobed, simple lobed and compound leaves.



As an extension of our seasons work, some of the children were very creative and painted beautiful trees for each season, winter, spring, summer, and fall.

Some of our seasonal favorites in the art area have been, painting pumpkins with Q-tips, using sponges to create beautiful fall trees, pin poking out leaves, bats and jack-o-lanterns, then gluing them onto a colorful piece of paper.



In the practical life area pumpkin and gourd scrubbing have been popular, and carefully using tweezers to pick Indian corn off the cob.



The children have been sewing, following a pattern on burlap to create a pumpkin. Activities all designed to increase control of movements, eye/hand coordination, attention span, concentration and fine and gross motor skills.

The younger children have been busy counting acorns 1-5 or pumpkins 1-10, others are working on the 100 board and number roll 1-1000.



The children are also excited when working with their sounds and word building. They are so very proud of the work they do at school and love to share with their families. Please look for your child's work and ask them to read or explain what they have learned.



We had 2 Birthdays this month, Happy Birthday Aliya and Bashir! Thank you to all our families who helped to make our Halloween party such a huge success. The children had so much fun making crafts, playing games and making a special snack together. It wouldn't have been possible without you!

And please don't forget to join us for our Montessori Education Night: "How Independence Leads to Achievements" on Thursday November 3 at 6:00pm .

OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



"Childhood is not a race to see how quickly a child can read, write and count. It is a small window of time to learn and develop at the pace that is right for each individual child. Earlier is not better."
-Magda Gerber

