



WATERDOWN MONTESSORI SCHOOL

1921 SNAKE ROAD, BURLINGTON L7P 4Y2

www.waterdownmontessori.com

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2011

♥ From the Principal's Desk

Ah...February. To many adults, this month means the winter blahs, cabin fever and dreams of tropical vacations. The office and the board are occupied with registration and plans for next fall. Meanwhile, the children are enjoying the limitless possibilities that this wonderful snowy weather offers, and are looking forward with anticipation and excitement to Valentine's Day and the Valentine's Family Party!

We have an enthusiastic group of parents this year, who are bubbling with ideas, and working very hard behind the scenes. The Valentines Party has always been our main fundraiser. As costs have risen sharply over the past few years, however, our profits from this event have continued to dwindle. The challenge for the committee is how to increase profits without overburdening families. We have made several decisions with that goal in mind.

To begin with, we are returning to the tried and true potluck dinner. There are suggestions on the sign up sheets. You are welcome to buy frozen pasta dishes such as lasagna or cannelloni – just bake them in your oven and bring them hot. You can even buy ready made pizzas! To try to balance that expense we are discontinuing the classroom raffle baskets this year. We will continue with the 50/50 draw and the wine raffle, but intend to have several smaller packages to raffle off rather than one enormous lot of wine. Of course the Silent Auction is key for the adults, as the DJ and magician are for the children.

You told us that you wanted more child-centred activities, and the committee has settled on several exciting new events. To keep your children busy and happy we have:

- Face painting and temporary tattoos
- The ever popular "Lucky Dip" (win a prize every time)
- Adopt-a-teddy (more on that elsewhere)
- Rona building kits
- One more event (to be confirmed)

The sign up sheets are filling up; please have a look to see if you can help with any empty spots. Please remember that *every family* is expected to provide an item for the Silent Auction this year. If you need ideas about how to proceed, ask at the office. Many of you have brought in your contribution already – thank you. We are also looking for bottles of wine, and small prizes for the children's "Lucky Dip".

We had a good turnout for the Elementary and Casa Workshop last month. This evening is a highlight for the children. They are so proud to demonstrate their work to adults. If you missed this event, remember that you do have a chance to observe in your child's classroom; sign up sheets are posted. Anyone is welcome to observe in the elementary classroom – just speak to Mrs. Barbara.

Don't forget that Dr. Steven J. Hughes will be speaking at Northstar Montessori School on Wednesday, February 23rd. The topic is "**Good at Doing Things: Montessori Education and Higher Level Thinking**". Tickets are \$25, and can be purchased at the office.

In this entertaining talk, Dr. Hughes describes how Maria Montessori's brain-based approach to education provides an unparalleled foundation for the development of academic, social, and executive functions critical for advanced problem solving and lifetime success. He shows how Montessori education parallels what we now know about brain development and fosters the development of advanced cognitive functions, social cognition, and such higher-order competencies as empathy and leadership. If you are interested, you can get a taste of what Dr. Hughes has to say by following this link:

Dr Steve Hughes: Montessori and the Future of Education
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faYco1b-IJI>

Happy Valentine's Day! ♥
Sue Reid-Kulpa
Principal

EARLY REGISTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2011, IS UNDERWAY.

Elementary Fees: A Proposal

We know that making the decision to keep your child at WMS for the elementary years is a difficult one for many people. While you appreciate all the benefits offered by a Montessori education, it is an additional expense. The cost of casa can often be offset by the benefits of claiming childcare. This is not applicable once your child enters elementary. If you have more than one child in the school the choice becomes more difficult. The board is cognizant of this fact, and is constantly trying to devise ways to help. We think we have an interesting proposal, based on sound business sense. Details should be available following this month's meeting.

If you think that a possible reduction in fees might make a difference to your decision, please speak to me.

Sue Reid-Kulpaka

"TODDLER" REMINDER

We have a waiting list for the toddler program, with more enquiries almost daily. If you want your child in the toddler class next year you must let the office know by the end of this week. We will be admitting children on our waiting list shortly thereafter.

MEMO TO:

THOSE OF YOU WHO WILL BE LEAVING
WATERDOWN MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Many of our third year casa students will be starting grade one in another school. Plans change, and other families may decide to leave for different reasons. We would appreciate knowing your decision as soon as possible, to help us plan for next year.

When and how you tell your children that they are moving to another school is, of course, up to you, but I would caution you to think carefully about your approach.

Why?

It happens every year about this time. Even before registration packages are sent home, the buzz begins:

Are you coming back next year? I might not be. When I'm bigger I'm going somewhere else. I visited my new school. I might be going to another school – they have three recesses there! You're going there? My Mom and Dad don't want me to go to that school. My new school is hard! I might go to a school where you wear uniforms!" You're my best friend - will we see each other again?

Though expressed most strongly among the elementary children, the anxiety and uncertainty is everywhere, and it can affect a whole class. Often children go through a period where they find it hard to focus on their work, or feel that what they are doing here is no longer important, because they will be leaving.

If at all possible we believe it is best to allow a child to complete or nearly complete their year before becoming aware of their departure from the school. If you are uncertain of your plans, they do not need to be aware of your struggles. When the time comes, all the opportunities for saying good-bye will be possible in the last week or two of school. As the year is wrapping up all the students are saying their summer good-byes and it is a natural time for the closure.

Fundraising Update

We are off to a good start in the fundraising department this year. Remember that every little bit helps. Here are the figures to date:

QSP Magazines:	\$ 922.00
MacMillans:	\$ 249.00
Two Pancake Breakfasts:	\$1,303.00
Club 54 Comedy Night:	\$1,495.00
Hot Lunches (so far):	\$ 893.00
Total:	\$3,862.00

(*The Christmas bake sale and the Muffin Mania sales are not included in this total.)

Our goal for the year is \$15,000.

February Birthdays

Sophie will be 5 on February 3.
Vivienne will be 2 on February 12.
Mason will be 2 on February 17.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OF YOU!

P.D. Day

The school will be closed on Friday, February 18. Teachers will be observing in other schools, or working in the building.

Income Tax Receipts

Receipts will be sent home this month. Please file yours in a safe place.

Valentines Cards Reminder

Children are welcome to bring cards for their classmates should they wish to do so. You are encouraged to have your child write his or her name on each card, but please do *not* write the names of classmates on each card.

WHY NOT? Well, because... 20 children x 20 cards = **400** cards for casa teachers to sort and put into backpacks.



Make and Adopt your very own Teddy Bear (or unicorn, or dinosaur, or bunny or hippo ...) at the Valentines Party!



Don't be disappointed!

The school currently has a **limited selection** of animals and only a **very few** outfits. If you pre-order, we will be sure to have your selection ready for you, with your new friend ready for stuffing and adoption at the Valentines party.

You may choose your animal, outfit and accessories from the list (and pictures) posted in the hallway beside the gym.

Each kit (\$20.00) includes:

15" teddy bear of your choice
Stuffing material
Star for wish making

Certificate of ownership

(to name the new friend)
T-shirt to dress up new created friend (pink or white)

PVC carrying bag

Optional popular items:

Outfits (\$10.00)
Accessories (\$5.00)

Place your order at the office.

**Last day to pre-order: Monday, February 8.
Think ahead: Great idea for birthday gifts!!**

**Valentines Family Party
Tickets are on sale now!**



We encourage you to invite extended family and friends!

MARCH BREAK CAMP

We have exciting news! Mrs. Julie and Ms. Wyn will be offering a camp during the first week of the March Break (March 7 – 12). You will find more information elsewhere in this newsletter.



SUMMER CAMPS!

1. **Emily and Meredith Kulpaka** will be hosting our June camp for the two weeks at the end of June. This year's dates are **June 13th – 17th** and **June 20th – 24th**. Camp is open to all WMS students aged 3 and up. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to speak to Madame Sue.

2. **Emily and Meredith Kulpaka** are back again for their summer camp at WMS. *Friends from outside the school are welcome!*

This year's dates and more information on all camps will be available later in the month.

Parent Observations

Curious about what your child does in the classroom each day? Now is your chance to find out. Parents have the opportunity to observe in their child's classroom for about half an hour.

If you have not already done so, please add your name to the sign up sheet outside your child's classroom, or call the office to arrange an observation time.

When your turn comes, you will be asked to sit quietly in a designated area, and watch the activities in the classroom. Please note that this is NOT a time for discussion with teachers. They will continue as if it was a regular day. Of course, the very fact that there is a parent in the room affects the children, but this is the closest we can come to letting you see how your child's classroom runs. It is very possible that you will have questions, comments and queries. You are welcome to jot down notes at the time to leave with the teacher, or to arrange a mutually convenient time to talk later.

Anyone who is interested in observing the elementary class is welcome to do so. Mrs. Barbara has extended an invitation to all parents in the school. Please speak to her or call the office if you are interested.

Elementary French

Mrs. Barbara and I have decided to try something a little different for the new year. Rather than withdrawing groups of children from the class for French lessons, I have begun taking French to the classroom for the afternoon twice a week. We have circle time, games and lessons with the whole class and then break into groups for different follow up work. It certainly feels less rushed and allows more time for additional activities. The idea was based on a conversation I had last fall with the principal of Ottawa Montessori School, who had just implemented a similar idea in their school. To find out more I will be going to Ottawa later this week to observe the program in that school. Stay tuned!

Madame Sue

Casa French

The children have been practicing vowel sounds, learning songs and counting. The four and five year olds are working on consonants and new vocabulary. All the students put a great deal of effort into recalling and reviewing words and sentences.

The activities are designed to encourage full participation and promote self-confidence. Students take part in alphabet games, word cards, story time, picture books and word repetition. We have been using finger puppets and felt materials to reinforce French vocabulary.

The program for the months of January/February is posted in the French room; you may pick up a copy at any time.

Madame Grace

News from Mrs. Julie and Ms. Wyn

What a surprise it was to walk into our classroom one morning to find a small "ecoAquarium" containing two African Dwarf frogs on the counter! They were a gift to the class from Hayden (and Mom of course!). We're still getting to know our new friends (we haven't named them yet) by observing them and reading as much as we can about them. For instance, we have read that frogs get half of their oxygen through their skin! This is why a frog's skin needs to be wet. We also learned that there are frogs on every continent except Antarctica!

We were a bit concerned one day when we saw one of the frogs doing a dead man's float in the tank. A quick Internet search revealed that our frog was "burbling", which means it was taking a little rest from swimming. We never tire of watching them!

One of our students (Julian) was so impressed with the ecoAquarium and its contents that he decided to write about it.



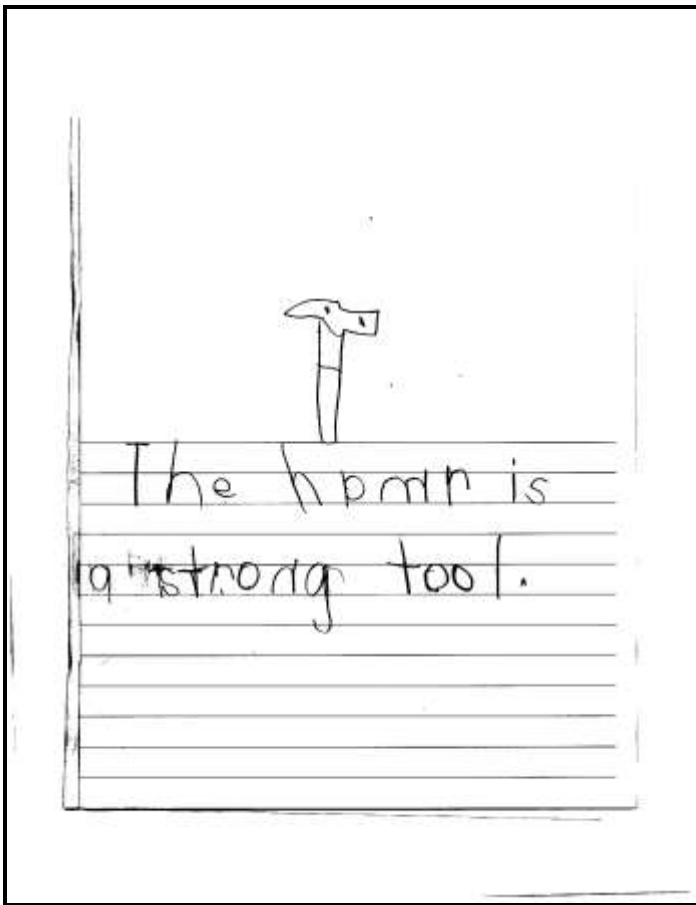
News from Mrs. Phyllis and Mrs. Judy

It is always encouraging to see the quality of work, especially from the older students at this time of year. They have come a long way and are coming up with their own sentences when doing their journals. Even the spelling is as a result of the phonetic skills they have been taught.

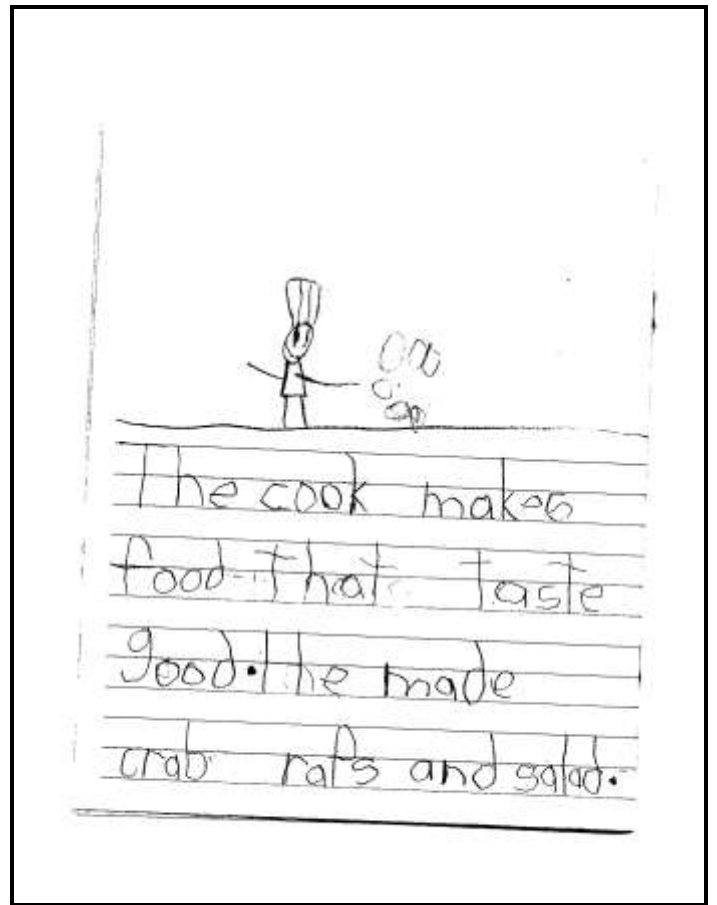
Here are some examples below. The first is done using the moveable alphabet, and the others are work written by the students in their journals.



Nathan



James



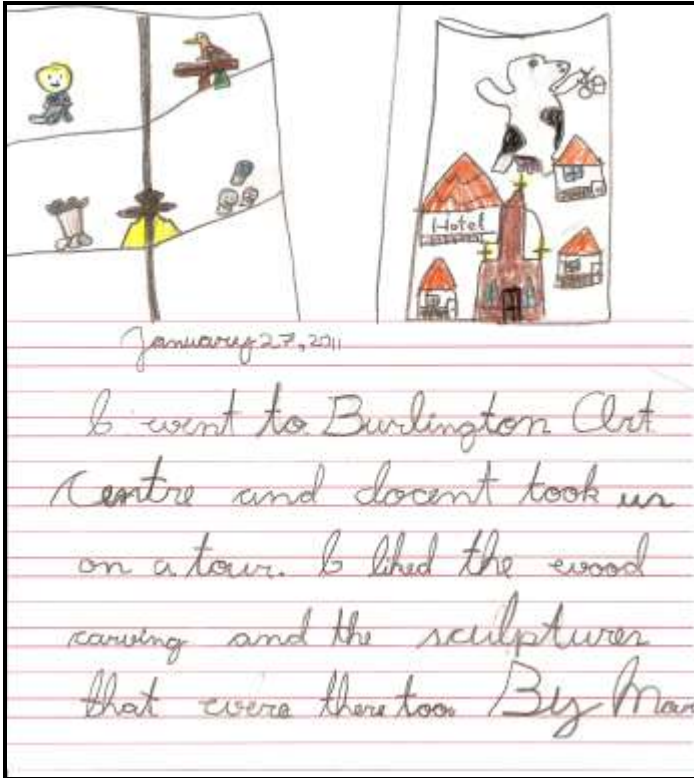
Michael



Sam

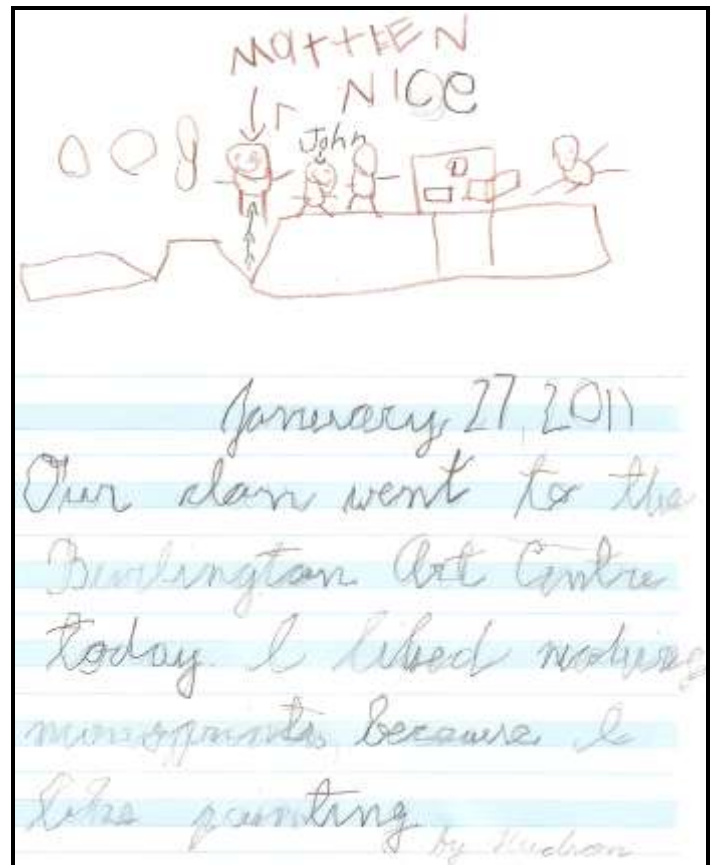
News from Mrs. Barbara's Class

On Thursday, January 27, the elementary class traveled to the Burlington Art Centre where they learned about mono-printing. We are very thankful to the two parents who drove: Michelle and Nancy. Below are the students' impressions of the trip:

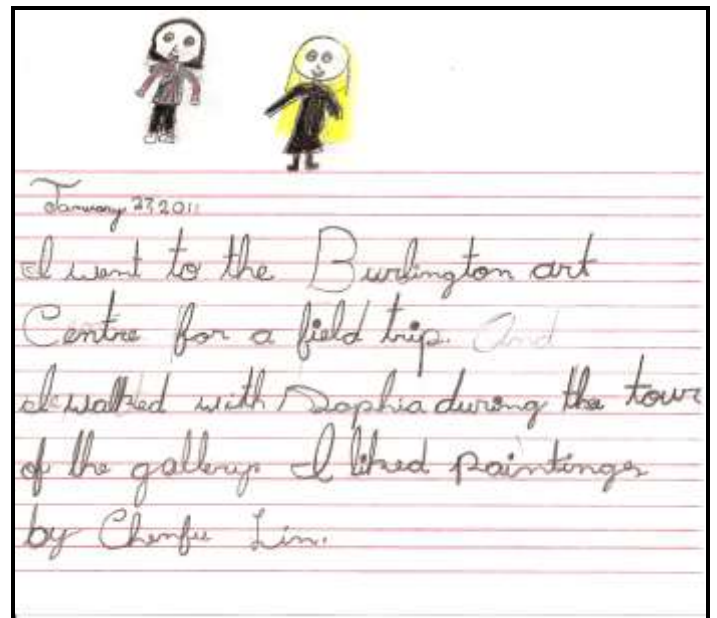


January 27, 2011
I went to Burlington Art Centre and docent took us on a tour. I liked the wood carving and the sculptures that were there too. By Max

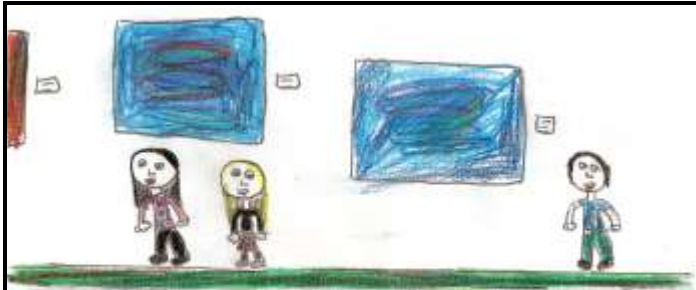
Jan 27 2011
We went to the Burlington Art Centre. We had a tour. Later we did a field trip called Mono-printing and we had music in Sophia's room. We had to read stories. did this
Laurie



MATTEN IN NICE
John
January 27, 2011
Our class went to the Burlington Art Centre today. I liked making monoprints because I like painting.
by Kuchon



January 27, 2011
I went to the Burlington art Centre for a field trip. And I walked with Sophia during the tour of the gallery. I liked paintings by Cherie Lim.



We went on a trip to Burlington Art Centre. It was awesome. We saw cool paintings and amazing sculptures and we also did some painting. It was fun. I love going to the B.A.C.
By Haris



January 21, 2011

I liked a painting by Shenfu Lin because it looked like a fire. There were red, yellow, white, purple, orange and black colours.
By Samir



January 21, 2011

We saw a big sculpture of a row. There were also people, church, police, plane, clouds, a big barn and I liked the row the most.
By Sebastian



January 27, 2011 - I like art. I like paint. I like this and I like that. It isn't easy to say these words but I like this and like that.

I thought this was an interesting article and have recopied it from the recent issue of the Montessori "Tomorrow's Child" magazine. (The school receives four issues each year; they are available to anyone interested in borrowing one to read.)

Tolerating Caterpillars

By Sharon Caldwell

"Tomorrow's Child" November 2010

Well, I must endure the presence of two or three caterpillars if I wish to become acquainted with the butterflies. It seems that they are very beautiful.

- The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Natasha Brown withdrew her child from his Montessori casa class after seeing a four-year-old hit another child. She informed the school administration that Montessori environments are supposed to be peaceful places and that she was looking for a school where the children are not allowed to be unkind to one another.

This scenario is all too common, but it is unfortunate, as in the majority of circumstances the parents' efforts at protecting their children are misguided and could end up actually disempowering their children. Just as children learn practical daily life skills (such as self-care and care of the environment) and cognitive skills through practice in real contexts, so, too, affective skills can be developed through real and meaningful interactions.

Parents often question whether the Montessori classroom prepares children for the 'real world.' Disagreeing with other people, and sometimes having to cope with aggression and violence in others, is all too common in the 'real world.' **[Editor's Note: See the article on bullying on p. 27.]** Failing to prepare our children to handle their own anger in appropriate ways, and protecting them from all threatening situations, deprives them of the opportunity to practice peace-making and conflict-resolution strategies.

Young children often hurt one another. This does not automatically imply that a child who sometimes bites or lashes out is a nascent bully. It is, on the contrary, the indication that he has not yet acquired and mastered appropriate social skills. The child who is on the receiving end of this behaviour may also lack the skills necessary to avoid such physical conflicts and strategies to deal with them when they arise.

A teacher who stands back when such a conflict arises risks the accusation of abandonment or of being irresponsible. This is the point at which the skills of observation come into play. It is necessary for the teacher to know her pupils, and obviously no caring adult will stand back and watch a five- or six-year-old attack a two-year-old. If a teacher knows her students well, and has provided adequate indirect preparation through a variety of lessons which provide the child with a range of strategies for handling conflict and possible aggression, she should give the children the space to bring those skills into practice. In a mature, multi-age class, older children are able to provide scaffolding for younger children when necessary, empowering them as mediators, as well as helping the 'combatants' learn that adult intervention is not always necessary.

There are clear disadvantages in the assumption that all conflicts (even those which may involve some level of physical aggression) require the intervention of an adult. On the contrary. Adult interference often teaches the opposite lesson to that which we intend. The natural tendency is to console the apparent victim and, in some way, chastise or correct the apparent perpetrator. The child who bites, hits, or kicks, however, may well have been responding in an impulsive way to a situation of frustration or even perceived threat to himself. Adult intervention in favour of the 'victim' may convey to the aggressor that his needs don't matter, resulting in further aggression.

Adult intervention to directly solve or mediate children's disputes reinforces dominator paradigm strategies – get someone stronger to handle a situation – and fails to develop skill sets that would enable children to both deal with aggression and anger, as well as the abilities needed to evolve a culture of peace in the environment.



As Dr. Montessori pointed out, peace is not merely the absence of war. A peaceful classroom is not a classroom where the adult ensures that no conflicts can occur, but one where the children, themselves, develop ways and means of resolving real-life disputes as they arise. Each new child entering the environment upsets any equilibrium that has been established and presents new opportunities for learning.

Montessori teachers and administrators can help parents to become partners in this process by highlighting that peace in the environment is a process that is ongoing. Inappropriate aggressive behaviour in young children should be seen as an error. Errors provide opportunities for learning and children can be helped to use visual and verbal cues from others to moderate their own behaviour. As a child gains control of his will and greater control of a variety of communication strategies, so he will begin to either avoid conflict or to handle disagreements and challenges in proactive ways.

By all means the teacher should intervene if a child is in real danger of being injured, or severely distressed. Occasional tears, hurt feelings or physical discomfort are, on the other hand, important constituents of emotional growth. Standing back and ignoring disputes, or brushing off a child's distress is indeed abandonment. Rushing in to prevent a potentially aggressive situation or to resolve all disputes is the affective domain's equivalent to doing a child's math problems for him or directly correcting the child's work.

Guiding a child to understand that you are available if your help is really needed, but clearly conveying to the children that you have the faith that they are able to handle a variety of situations alone is immensely empowering.

Self-control at an early age helps avoid pitfalls: study

CARLY WEEKS

From Tuesday's Globe and Mail

Published Monday, Jan. 24, 2011 7:16PM EST

Last updated Monday, Jan. 24, 2011 11:07PM EST

All parents want their children to earn top marks in school and ensure a bright and prosperous future for themselves.

But a growing body of evidence suggests a child's success in life may rest heavily on an entirely different factor: self-control.

A child's ability early in life to wait his or her turn, complete a task or avoid being easily frustrated can help predict future health, wealth and criminal activity, a new study has found.

Researchers who have been following about 1,000 children in New Zealand for more than 30 years found those who had strong self-control skills as young as age 3, including conscientiousness, self-discipline and perseverance, were less likely to abuse drugs, develop health problems, become a single parent, experience financial difficulties or be convicted of a crime as adults than those with low self-control scores.

The findings, published on Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, were consistent regardless of an individual's intelligence or social class, researchers said.

The researchers determined the children's levels of self-control by questioning parents, teachers, other observers and the participants themselves at various points in their lives. When the group reached age 32, researchers measured their health, financial situation and criminal activity.

They found that those with the least self-control early in life were up to three times more likely to develop multiple health problems, struggle financially or be convicted of a crime.

For instance, 11 per cent of children with the highest rates of self-control developed multiple health problems by age 32 compared with 27 per cent of those with the lowest self-control rates. Only 13 per cent of the children with high self-control rates had been convicted of a crime by age 32, compared with more than 40 per cent of the children with the lowest self-control rates.

Some of the negative characteristics among the study participants with low self-control had already begun to emerge by the time they were teenagers.

Children with self-control problems were more likely to start smoking by age 15, drop out of school or become teenaged parents. The researchers called these events “snares” that would increase their chances of having financial, criminal and health problems as adults.

The study leaves some important questions unanswered. For instance, it offers no explanation of exactly how a toddler’s ability to wait patiently or remain motivated to reach a goal affects financial, social and physical well-being later on.

Even so, an increasing number of experts agree the relationship between self-control and future success or failure is unmistakable.

“Self-control is a vital skill for scanning the horizon to be prepared for what might happen to you, for envisaging your own future possibilities, for planning ahead to get where you want to go, for controlling your temper when life frustrates you ...” Terrie Moffitt, a Duke University psychologist and the lead author of the study, said in an e-mail from New Zealand. “We all use it every day, but some of us use it more skillfully than others.”

The challenge is to uncover how the relationship works and what can be done to prevent low self-control from creating a negative cascade effect throughout a person’s life, said Alex Piquero, the Gordon P. Waldo professor of criminology at Florida State University, who was not involved in the study.

“There is a lot of evidence that’s accumulated now,” Prof. Piquero said in an interview. “Now the key is to figure [the relationship] out.”

He highlighted the fact that children involved in the study who were able to improve their self-control abilities as they aged avoided many of the negative pitfalls of their peers. Given the evidence, Prof.

Piquero said, policy-makers should consider ways to educate children and their parents about the importance of self-control and its potential impact on the rest of a child’s life.

“You’re training people to think about the long-term consequences of their behaviour,” he said.



THE CANADIAN COUNCIL
OF MONTESSORI ADMINISTRATORS
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES ADMINISTRATEURS
DES ÉCOLES MONTESSORI

Mission: CCMA is an association of Administrators of Canadian Montessori Schools that provides mutual support and services to its members and acts as a unified voice to organizations and agencies.
Vision: To Promote standards of excellence for Canadian Montessori educators and programmes to help children reach their full potential.

WE ARE PLEASED TO PRESENT AN EXCLUSIVE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT
FOR PARENTS, STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Steven J. Hughes

Good at Doing Things: Montessori Education and Higher Level Thinking

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2011
NORTHSTAR MONTESSORI SCHOOL
4900 TOMKEN ROAD, MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

TIME: 7:30 P.M.



In this entertaining talk, Dr. Hughes describes how Maria Montessori's brain-based approach to education provides an unparalleled foundation for the development of academic, social, and executive functions critical for advanced problem solving and lifetime success. He shows how Montessori education parallels what we now know about brain development and fosters the development of advanced cognitive functions, social cognition, and such higher-order competencies as empathy and leadership.



BIOGRAPHY:

Steven J. Hughes, PhD, LP, ABPdN is an assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at the University of Minnesota Medical School and maintains a private practice where he specializes in assessment of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and other learning and behavioural problems. His research interests include measurement of attention and executive functioning in children and the neurodevelopmental benefits of classical Montessori education. Dr. Hughes is also a Montessori parent and a frequent guest lecturer at the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota and at Montessori schools around Minnesota and Wisconsin.

TICKET COST: \$25

Payment Options: VISA, MasterCard, American Express, cheque or cash at the door

To order tickets: Contact the CCMA Office: 416-239-1166 or 1-800-954-6300, Email: ccma@bellnet.ca
or obtain tickets from your child's CCMA Montessori school

WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE CCV INSURANCE & FINANCIAL SERVICES WHO HELPED MAKE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE.



BE SURE.

March Break Science Camp

@ WMS from March 7-11, 2011

Calling all scientists ages 4 to 6!

Are you excited by the opportunity to eat sunlight? How about experimenting with slime? Ready for some kitchen chemistry?

Then you will want to join Mrs. Julie and Ms Wyn for their first ever March Break Science Camp!

We'll spend mornings conducting experiments involving light, colour, measuring, gravity and energy. After lunch, we will have fun with music and movement, yoga, cooking, games, gym and story time.

Camp will run Monday to Friday from 9 am to 3:30 pm. \$275/wk.

Before and after care available daily ½ hour before and after camp.

Comfortable clothes, morning snack and lunch required. We will provide afternoon snack.

Tear off and give to Mrs. Julie or Ms. Wyn.

I am interested in learning more/registering for March Break Science Camp.

Parent's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Yes, I am interested in before /after care.