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## Parent and Child Interactions

In our ever-changing world, it is important to have a secure relationship with your child, one where your child feels comfortable speaking to you about a concern. Your child might see something on television or hear something at school. Following are some suggestions for dealing with concerns from your child.

- Determine the age appropriateness of the topic. Depending on the age of the child and their emotional readiness some topics should not be dealt with in an in-depth way.
  - If the topic is coming through television, watch the program with your child. This way you are aware of what your child saw or heard. It is not recommended that young children watch news programs. The images shown on television can be alarming to a child.
  - Ask your child if they would like to talk with you about what they heard or what they saw. Some children need time to process what they have seen or heard. They may not be able to talk about the issue right away. If the child does not want to talk about it right away, let them know you are available when they are ready. It may take hours, days or weeks before the child is ready to talk. It may also be in a surprising place, such as in the car on the way to school or after story time at night.
- If appropriate to the situation, share how you feel about it and let them know their feelings are OK/normal.
  - If the situation is fearful to your child, reassure them that you will take care of them and protect them.
  - Sometimes there are scary things going on in the world and we may not have much control over changing them. Become knowledgeable and share what you feel is appropriate with the child.
  - Make sure your child knows that there is someone in charge and making sure we are safe. Some issues may require talking about your faith and how that influences your actions.
  - Try distracting your child so they do not dwell on the issue. Children can easily fixate on a topic. Although it is important to encourage your child to talk about when ready, it is equally as important to keep the issue in perspective in terms of the child's life.

Your child may bring the issue up repeatedly over a period of time. By speaking with them and showing support, your child will learn how to handle situations they encounter throughout their life.



# Magnificent Montessori Materials: Geography

The Geographical Material presented to the student enables the child to gain familiarity and awareness about the world on a larger scale. Early on the child is introduced to the world through hands on materials. In the study of geography children are first shown representations of the universe and our solar system. Next are globes that represent the Earth. The first globe is blue water and sandpaper land. The object is to invite the child to experience the globe in a tactile way. The second globe is the same as the first except that the sandpaper continents are smooth. The third globe has continents that are colored. At this stage the child practices learning the names of continents and oceans.

There is a fabulous Montessori lesson that gives the child the impression of cutting the Earth in half (hemispheres) to create flat maps. The child starts with the World map and then progresses, at his own pace, through maps depending on where they live. So, a child that lives in the USA would learn the North America map next. The flat maps are called puzzle maps. There is a puzzle map for each continent.



After the child completes the puzzle maps and can successfully name continents and countries, they can work on pin maps. Pin maps are flat boards with holes in each country – holes for the name of the country, the name of the capital city and a picture of the country's flag. Political Geography includes studying and learning about people of other countries. Many Montessori classrooms reflect diversity. By learning about each other the children learn about other people and how similar and yet how different we all are.

The study of landforms begins with pre-molded forms (relief models). The child learns the first few landforms by adding water to the pre-molded forms. The child learns the names of the landforms. As the child progresses, they begin to construct their own landforms, with paper and scissors or by creating a clay model. Eventually the child identifies a variety of landforms found in nature. Of course, seeing a real example of the landform is ideal. As the child gets older he can study specific landforms, such as learning about the parts of a volcano.

In a Montessori environment, a child learns about flags of different countries and states, the study of continents, and countries. It is through geographical exposure that a child learns about the world in which we live.



## Tips From Teachers:

### Helping Your Child Lead a Meaningful Life

How can you and your child make a significant impact on society? One of the goals of a Montessori classroom is to assist the child in learning about their place in the world. How does one's presence in the world improve the life of another? The following are some examples of how you as a parent can help your child lead a meaningful life.

- ✓ Volunteer your time.
- ✓ Lead by example.
- ✓ Determine which activities are meaningful in your life.
- ✓ Involve your child early on in meaningful activities.
- ✓ Read stories to your child about real heroes and heroines. Some great people that have made a difference: Maria Montessori, Harriet Stowe, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Theresa, Johnny Appleseed, Rosa Parks, Dalai Lama.
- ✓ Strive to be your best and help your child be their best.

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“If a child is to keep alive his wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.”

--- Rachel Carson, American biologist (1907-1964)

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## 100 Years of Montessori Education

2007 marks the 100 year anniversary of the Montessori Method.

Montessori is a worldwide social movement intended to **Champion the Cause of all Children.**

On the 6th January 2007 it will be 100 years since Dr. Maria Montessori opened the first Casa dei Bambini in San Lorenzo – Montessori has been around for 100 years and is still going strong – this is something to celebrate! Think about how you can help to celebrate 100 years of Montessori education and improving the lives of children.





## Questions from Montessori Parents

**Q:** How do I know if there is too much emphasis on practical life in my child's Montessori classroom?

**A:** Montessori Directress' are trained to observe and respond to the needs of each child. Depending on the age group, the child may be spending the majority of their time in the practical life area of the classroom. Toddler and three-year-old children spend almost all of their time in practical life. This is developmentally appropriate and assists the child in their development of order, concentration, coordination and independence. Through practical life work the child learns work habits that will enable him to work in the other areas of the classroom.

The Montessori environment is specially designed by the Montessori Directress. Each Directress brings her own knowledge and expertise to the classroom. That being said, there are some Directress' that enjoy the practical life area of the classroom. They enjoy finding new materials and changing work out regularly so the children are drawn to that area of the classroom. Directress' also observe the child and invite him to lessons in other areas of the classroom if they observe him spending most of his time in that area. So, if it is your child's first year

in a Montessori classroom or if your child is of a young age, I would not be too concerned about him spending too much time in that area of the classroom. If you continue to be concerned, schedule a time to observe in the classroom (30 minutes or more) and then make an appointment to visit with the Directress.

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**Q:** My child is starting in a Montessori classroom. I am concerned because she is the youngest child in the class. What are the benefits of having mixed aged groups and how can I make sure her adjustment is smooth?

**A:** The benefits of multi-aged grouping are quantifiable. In a Montessori environment, the children are grouped in three year age spans for many reasons. One reason for the multi-aged grouping is that the classroom functions like a family. The older children take care of the younger children like they are younger siblings. The younger children know at some point they will become the leaders and caretakers of the room. Likely, your daughter will find friends that are similar in age, if not exactly the same age. She will also likely be taken under the wing of an older student in the class and have no problems adjusting.

