

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL
STEPPING STONES LONG DAY CARE

CHRONICLE

SPRING



OUR LITTLE SUPERSTARS!

PHOTOS FROM
THE AMAZING
6-12 PRODUCTION

START A CONVERSATION

20 BETTER THINGS
TO SAY TO YOUR
CHILD INSTEAD OF
"HOW WAS YOUR DAY?"

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SPRING 2018 **NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE**



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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

OUR IMAGINATIVE CHILDREN



Throughout our school year there are many opportunities for our children to demonstrate their creativity and imagination. We see this through their day to day work, events such as the 6-12 production and in many other settings. Soon after the production I was caused to reflect on what Maria Montessori thought about the place of creativity and imagination in learning.



The laborious testing of traditional education gives little consideration to the complexity of the human mind and memory.

You often hear the assertion that Maria Montessori was against fantasy and imaginary play. This notion could not be further from the truth. Throughout Maria Montessori's extensive observations of children she identified the Four Planes of Development. Through this framework she recognised that there are stages when children are drawn towards real, everyday objects and experiences and then times when their creativity and imagination take over, and the world of fantasy and creativity come alive. It was through this framework that Maria Montessori highly valued and promoted imagination in the educational setting and saw that it had immense value.

For young children Montessori did observe that children in the First Plane of Development were not yet in the realm of abstract thought. She saw that they were not able to think abstractly and were only momentarily entertained by dragons, fairies and fantasy. Instead her observations led her to realise that they were in fact drawn to everyday experiences, working with real objects in their natural environment, and it was these experiences that held the most value to them.

Montessori writes in the Secret of Childhood this observation "Though the school contained some really wonderful toys, the children never chose them. This surprised me so much that I myself intervened, to show them how to use such toys, teaching them how to handle the doll's crockery, lighting the fire in the tiny doll's kitchen, setting a pretty doll beside it. The children showed interest for a time, but then went away, and they never made such toys the objects of their spontaneous choice. And so I understood that in a child's life play is perhaps something inferior, to which he has recourse for want of something better..."

In this way we see in the 0-6 environment a focus on sensorial and practical life experiences as the young child develops their understanding of their place in the world.



AS THE CHILD

developed into the Second Plane child, Maria's observations led her to highly value the role of imagination and creativity, and she saw the significant power of imagination in the children aged 6-12. It is undeniable that we too see this power of imagination in our children. This was clear in the 6-12 production presented by our Second Plane children on Friday night, and on many other occasions.

Maria Montessori saw the imagination as the foundation of intelligence and recognised that it unlocked all aspects of human endeavour. She writes that "human consciousness comes into the world as a flaming ball of imagination. Everything invented by man, physical or mental, is the fruit of someone's imagination. In the study of history and geography we are helpless without imagination, and when we propose to introduce the universe to the child, what but imagination can be of use to us?..." "The secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination. Our aim therefore is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his inmost core." (Maria Montessori, *To Educate the Human Potential*).

In our classrooms when students learn that a spider has 8 legs or about famous explorers, these facts are connected with our feelings, emotions, intentions and the many facets of our mental lives.

THE VALUE

that Maria Montessori places on the role of imagination can be seen through the manner in which the unfolding story of the Universe is delivered through the Great Stories. These stories and many other aspects of the curriculum are delivered in a way that responds to the 'flaming ball of imagination' that Maria describes. Contrary to the Montessori educational model is the manner in which technologies have caused us to think about ourselves in response to the ways in which modern information is stored. Our modern educational systems think of learning as an analogous intellectual process, recording symbols and information to be later retrieved. Unfortunately, our mind is not particularly effective at this type of storage and retrieval and we do not simply learn the way a computer learns. The laborious testing of traditional education gives little consideration to the complexity of the human mind and memory.

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simply learn the way a
computer learns.

IN OUR CLASSROOMS

when students learn that a spider has 8 legs or about famous explorers these facts are connected with our feelings, emotions, intentions and the many facets of our mental lives. The human memory is more organic and less orderly. It is a place where imagination and experience intersect and where the more lively the imagination, the more combinations and possibilities about our world are found.

The Montessori environment seeks to support imagination, and provide a classroom that is more hospitable to students' emotions, and values the qualities of student experience as part of the learning environment. This value and opportunity of learning and imagination is present because the Montessori classroom is, as Maria Montessori put it "a place where the child is enthused to their core".

Adam Scotney
Principal



REFERENCES

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Maria Montessori, *To Educate the Human Potential*
Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*
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INFANT & TODDLER PROGRAMS

A REFLECTION

by Megan Nguyen (Infant & Toddler Directress)

During WWII, while Maria Montessori was placed in a refugee camp while in India, she began to think and reflect more on the child from birth to three years of age. For the first time in her life she had the opportunity to be surrounded by many young children and was able to observe their behaviours and development.

Dr. Montessori was in contact with one of her former students, Adele Costa Gnocchi who had a school in Rome. It was Costa Gnocchi who first began Montessori's ideas for the child under three. Later, Dr. Silvana Montanaro, (author of Understanding the Human Being) became involved after experiencing the benefits of such programs with her own daughter.

These three women established the foundation of not only supporting infant and toddler development, but also their parents. We have all heard by now that the first three years of life are the most important; the brain grows so rapidly during this period and the environment can aid or hinder this development. It's also an important time for parents as they need much support as they try to overcome postnatal depletion while at the same time guiding this young life force on a happy, healthy and stable path. As we all know, there is unmeasurable energy that goes into these first years!

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PEOPLE OFTEN

ask me what we do in our infant and toddler programs. Well, in short, we do life! A large element is creating a meaningful and secure environment that fosters freedom of movement which in turn aids the growth of independence. All Montessori junkies have an understanding of this concept and its importance. However, it really is so much more. We do indeed, do life. We support this young, little life force and help him navigate through these early years. We role model to instill grace and courtesies, we see mistakes as learning opportunities and we allow the young child to own both his challenges and triumphs. While doing all of this we tolerate all forms of emotions and do all in our power to support and protect the child's Sensitive Periods of development.



AS A DIRECTRESS,

I have to be a bit of a plate spinner. When the first child arrives I ensure that he is secure in his first task for the morning while greeting the next child and the next. At the same time I constantly observe the children and adults for any signs of guidance that might be needed. The child might need a new presentation shown to him or the parent might need assistance if a power struggle has ensued. There is certainly an ebb and flow of the day which is created by the children and it's my job to protect the peace and harmony of this energy. This means making sure that we as adults do not dominate the space with chitter chatter or become too engaged with device use. The space and time belongs to the children and they must always feel valued and appreciated by the adults.



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AS I PREPARE

to disembark on a new journey after this term, I reflect on the unique role that I have as an Infant & Toddler Directress. All successful Montessori schools have very strong Under 3's programs. A healthy program is essential to any school as it is like that large, bottom block of the Pink Tower; it is the foundation of all the programs that follow it. That first foundational piece will always support the others with strength as long as schools invest in them. Parents who are supported on their Montessori journey from the start do not just see it as an academic philosophy but as a lifestyle. They find joy and security in the fact that they have found the keys to unlock their child's potential from the start and will invest for this continuation in the future.

I love a challenge and when I first came to Northside, I was certainly presented with one to grow the Toddler Program. I am happy to now not only hand over just one program, but three to the next Directress. These programs, especially with the establishment of the Transition Program last year, have been a huge benefit to the school. Last year we graduated a dozen children up to our Pre-Primary and we've seen it steady on this year as well.

All of this would not be possible without the tremendous support from the school community. Thank you to all of the parents who help promote our Under 3's Programs to their friends and family. I also cannot thank the NMS Directresses and assistants enough. I chose a role at NMS because of these extraordinary professionals; their passion and skill for their craft are admirable and inspiring. There has not been a day that has gone by where one of these beautiful people has not stopped to ask how things are going or offered support or collaboration for one of my many goals.

I wish continued growth to the programs as I pass the torch onto the next caretaker. I cherish the special bonds I have formed with both parents and children and I look forward to maintaining these as I continue my role as a parent at the school with my own three. This is not goodbye, this is 'til we meet again...in the school car park.

Megan Nguyen, Infant & Toddler Directress.

BOARD CORNER

THE TOP FIVE THINGS I HAVE LEARNED SO FAR

I just wanted to take this opportunity to share a few thoughts on what I have learned so far in life that may or may not resonate with many parents. I do believe, however, that every human has a fascinating life story to tell, that is far more interesting and genuine than anything we would ever see on television or at the cinema.

by Clayton Spencer

1. "We are all spirits having a human experience not humans having a spiritual experience".

To me this is fundamental and allows for life experiences to be placed in a proper and consistent context. It is also a belief that seems to resonate with many parents and especially our kids. I feel we are all ultimately connected spiritually and many differences that we are programmed to believe exist, are largely or completely artificial.

I particularly like that Montessori education has room for beliefs like this, as well as any others that people may hold around spirit. Mainstream education, in my personal experience, tends to try and explain away spiritual beliefs or try and make them consistent with a certain theme, when a variation in belief systems should be celebrated, in my mind.

I have learned to just be a good parent by giving the kids my undivided attention when they tell a story, hugging them without needing a specific reason...

2. No one has all the answers in life or even most of them. We are all just trying to work it out.

Like many people, I spent years reading many of the latest books on diet, spirit, self-help and parenting until I realised that most books just simply repeat the same messages. Most of the real wisdom came from self-reflection, use of discernment and in many cases from the pure and innate wisdom from my children, who look at many issues with a purity of mind that has yet to be tainted by mass media.

3. Be a "good parent" not a "great one".

Many of us (including me) feel the pressure to make sure our children "get" a good education, learn competitiveness/sportsmanship playing Saturday sport and worry if they are not keeping up with their peers. This can often generate intense emotional pain for both parents and their kids. Instead I have learned to just be a good parent by giving the kids my undivided attention when they tell a story, hug them without needing a specific reason and allow them to learn by making the occasional mistake. We are all good parents I feel, we just need to tune out from all the negative messages we are bombarded with daily and simply enjoy spending time with our kids....before they become teens.

We are all good parents I feel, we just need to tune out from all the negative messages we are bombarded with daily and simply enjoy spending time with our kids.

4. There is more to life than Social Media or Reality Television...

I have learned to switch off the TV and phone...Spend some time getting dirty in the garden, buy a couple of chickens and free range them in the backyard and collect the eggs with the kids. I see this as claiming back my "human time".

5. Is what we see on the news really what we see in our own personal experience?

Despite all the deliberate messaging we are all exposed to through TV and particularly the news about the latest tragedy or escalating crime rate, I have learned to ask myself one key question. Does what I am seeing on the screen fit with my own personal experience, as a human and living with humans? More often than not, the two could not be more inconsistent. As a result, I have come to really believe that the overwhelming majority of humans, are inherently loving, and do not want to harm others. Let's go easy on one another..It's in our very nature.

If any of these thoughts resonate or not, I'm always happy to discuss.

Clayton Spencer.

FINDING COMMUNITY

by Emma Spencer (P&C Committee President)

The Importance of Community has long been studied in psychological and anthropological circles. As social creatures, humans need to be surrounded by a group of connected individuals to thrive and achieve common and individual goals. Researchers have also identified that raising children in a community is integral to their skill development, mental health and sense of self. Traditionally these "communities" would have been a co-operative of family or families, supporting each other to meet the needs of the individual and group as a whole. At an individual level, having a collection of aunts, uncles, cousins and elders all supporting you is the most helpful way to becoming a psychologically healthy and integrated individual.

However, our world has changed and research and discussion on community now focusses on the loss of community and the impacts of this. These include a rise in loneliness, stress and alienation. Mental health is on the rise and the loss of community and connection has been acknowledged as a contributing factor to this. New mothers are left at home alone, to care for newborns with no support, except for a tired partner who returns home after a day at work with an empty tank. Globalisation now means that couples are raising children in countries other than their native, in unit blocks or stand-alone homes, with few family members and friends available to support them.

For those of us at Northside Montessori, what better place for us to form connection than within our school community.



IN THIS MODERN AGE

the onus is therefore on the individual to draw community around them. We must find our communities in groups that we are involved in, work groups, sports groups, book clubs and so on. For those of us at Northside Montessori, what better place for us to form connection than within our school community.

We are fortunate to be connected from the outset with the understanding of the Montessori Philosophy and the desire for our children to be educated under the guiding principles developed Dr Maria Montessori.



IT IS FOR these reasons that over the last 9 months I have been working with the administrative team and parenting community to re-establish a parent and community committee, a group focussed on bringing our Northside Community together. Through giving the parents and community a voice and focussing on social and support activities, the group hopes to build a sense of togetherness, a sense of fun, friendship and connection. We are fortunate to have a strong foundation at our school already, of closely connected members and a caring administration team. By having a centralised group of community and administrative members working together with a focus on community connection and enrichment, we should all look forward to the benefits that this brings.

IF YOU HAVE

any suggestions or questions you would like directed to the Parents and Community Committee, please email these to pandcccommittee@northsidemontessori.edu.nsw.au. All parents and community members are invited to the term-based P&C meetings and information related to these will be regularly promoted in the school newsletter and on Skoolbag App alerts. As the President of the P&C I look forward to ongoing engagement and connection within our school community and receiving your feedback and input in achieving this.



FROM THE 3-6

ROSELLA CLASS

After a few weeks of getting used to me, the children are now working well and some of our older extended day children are really getting excited about moving into primary next term.

by Jane Walker (3-6 Directress)

Three weeks ago, I read our Extended Days a book called "Peter's Old House" which is about an old man (a sailor) who lived in the oldest, scruffiest house in the street, which was almost falling down. This man had many adventures during his life, spoke many languages, helped refugees and told the local children lots of amazing stories of his adventures around the world. Not only that, Peter also used to mend broken clocks and locks, play instruments, help fix up the children's injuries, fix up their pets and he used to make amazing wooden toy boats for them. He was very poor, because he never charged for his services. One day, a very stern looking man in a uniform turned up and told Peter that if he didn't smarten up his house, he would be thrown out and the house pulled down. The children all got together and told their parents. The whole village turned up to fix Peter's house which they painted yellow. By the time the stern man in a uniform turned up, the little old house at the end of the street had been transformed into a "new" house which saved the old man from being turfed out into the street.

The children made the programs and came up with some wonderful ideas so that everyone was included.



WHEN I READ THE STORY,

the Extended Days wanted to put on a play for the parents which they did last Wednesday, after a couple of weeks of excitement and anticipation. The children made the programs and came up with some wonderful ideas so that everyone was included. Thank you to all the parents for coming and a special thank you to those Extended Days who acted in the play. Samir, you made a very good "Peter" and even though you were sick, you turned up for your part. I think that doing little things like this does wonders for the children's confidence and self-esteem.

DURING THAT WEEK,

we also had our Farmer Friday and I owe the parents a big hand for setting it all up for me as I was away. We raised quite a bit, I believe which is excellent. I was actually out in the country and I was very shocked at how dry and arid it is out there at the moment. I do not know how those sheep and cows survive, so it made me feel good that we could at least do some little thing to help our farmers.

ANOTHER BOOK

we are reading at the moment is "Have you filled a bucket today?" This is how we can make others feel good about themselves (filling a bucket and how we can fill other people's buckets so that they feel happy and fulfilled. It also talks about being a "bucket dipper". This is when you can say something about someone which is not kind or if you say something unkind directly to them. This will "empty their buckets". However, if you do or say something unkind to someone, exclude them or hurt them, then you will find that your own "bucket" will empty out and no one will feel good about themselves. It is an easy concept for children to understand and if you want to read the story, you can order the book or watch it being read on Youtube. In this world of social media, inappropriate language on television and our own behavioural modelling, I think it a wonderful concept for young children and it is much easier to understand than "use kind words".

IN OUR CLASS,

we now have a French shelf with three-part cards, so that the children will learn some French vocabulary with Blandine. If any one has anything "French" that they might donate or lend, please let us use it for a while, i.e. a model of the Eiffel Tower or a puzzle. We do have the French flag, so we are getting there.

This week we are going to review the parts of the body and learn about the internal organs and "How our body works". If they let me I might even borrow the skeleton from Primary... Until next time.

Jane, Elle, Hyun and Blandine

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI

GRADUATE PANEL

Recently we held our annual Graduate Panel. This is always an enlightening and entertaining evening and our 2018 Panel proved no exception.

by Margaret Kroeger (9-12 Directress)

We had over 12 graduates on the panel from age 12 to 30. They came from a range of high schools from private, single gender and co-educational independent schools, to local government schools and selective schools. The older graduates shared their experiences at Northside and how it impacted their university and work force experiences. All our panellists spoke about the positive legacy of a Montessori education. It was a powerful night with the opportunity for the audience to ask questions and interact with our graduates in an honest and informative way. Please see below a sample of some of the questions posed and responses given.

The older graduates shared their experiences at Northside and how it impacted their university and work force experiences.

Q. How did you find the transition to high school?

A. The transition to high school did make me nervous at first. It was a change dealing with a lot more students and dealing with lots of new teachers and getting to the right room at the right time. But the work was fine. I liked learning and that was encouraged in Northside.

A. I found it hard to get to know the teachers at first in high school. They didn't really seem to want to get to know us at the start. The teachers kept telling me to stop asking questions. I want to understand what I'm learning - not just to get a good test result. I really want to understand it fully. That's why I kept asking questions. Now my new teachers are used to me. It helped my friends too because they wouldn't ask. So when I asked, it helped others.

"I like to learn.
It's not just about a
test. It's about really
understanding how
things work."

Q. How did your learning change from Northside to high school and beyond?

A. Montessori allowed you to learn at your own pace. At Northside, you learnt because it was interesting. There were materials to help you and it was hands on. You got inspired by others. They'd be doing an experiment and you would get interested too. High school is not like that. In high school, most of the kids want to know if it is 'in the test'. But for me, I like to learn. It's not just about a test. It's about really understanding how things work.

A. University was more like Northside. You work together in groups. There's discussion and a lot of collaboration. At Northside you were treated like people who had a say in their learning. I felt that come back when I went to uni. It went away a bit while I was in high school.

Q. How did your relationships with educators change from Northside to high school? How did your relationship with peers change? Was that confusing for you?

A. I was used to chatting to adults at Northside. Teachers weren't so much like teachers - they helped me and were part of my learning. You could talk to them and they knew you. So I found it easier to engage with adults at high school. We had mixed ages at Northside. You got helped by the older children in your class and you got a chance to help others. We had a small group in our graduating year so we had to find ways to deal with others - even when we were upset. You had to deal with the situation. That gave me some skills that I think helped for high school.

A. In high school you just need to find your group. And it might take a while. But I was willing to talk with lots of different people - from Year 7 to Year 12 students. Age wasn't an issue or a barrier. Other kids would say 'Oh, I could never talk to them. They're older.' But to me they were just people. That's what Northside taught me.

A. Learning for my friends at high school was all about marks. For me I was happy to help people if they didn't understand the homework or a Math question. That was what we did at Northside. But at high school, some kids are really competitive. I found that hard. I didn't care if I got more marks as the person next to me. I just wanted to do the best that I could do. I wanted to understand the work. That wasn't the same as other people. It wasn't all about marks for me. I just wanted to keep getting better and better with my work.

"I just wanted to do the best that I could do. I wanted to understand the work. It wasn't all about marks for me. I just wanted to keep getting better and better with my work."



Q. How has Montessori impacted your life in the workforce after university/high school?

A. Well I'm a teacher now. I want my students to love to learn. I want to teach the whole child – not just academically but socially and emotionally. Just like Northside. It has impacted the way I teach. I try to be as individual and hands on in my lessons - cause I know it works. At Northside all the adults knew us. They knew what our interests were and where we needed more help. I want to be like that for my students.

WE THANK ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN OUR GRADUATE PANEL.

"University was more like Northside. You work together in groups. There's discussion and a lot of collaboration. At Northside you were treated like people who had a say in their learning. I felt that come back when I went to uni."



SWIMMING

AT NORTHSIDE

by Mary Abolins (Sports Teacher)

How lucky is Northside Montessori again. "Sporting Schools" has given us funding again and we are using it for our swimming program.

This term extended day, levels 4, 5 & 6 are having swimming lessons at Aqua Bliss which is in walking distance from Northside Montessori. What is nice about this venue we are the sole users of the pool when we are having our swimming lessons and it is heated to 32 degrees.

The lessons are 45 minutes in length and the children are allocated trained instructor for their swimming ability. Aqua Bliss prides themselves on teaching the children to learn to swim the right way and building a foundation of water safety and life skills.

Swimming is an integral part of the Physical Education program and also an integral part of the Australian lifestyle. Knowing how to swim is an essential and potentially life-saving tool which is particularly important in Australia where we are surrounded by some of the world's most beautiful beaches.

Swimming is a great skill for children and adults alike;

- it builds confidence
- burns energy
- improves general health
- improves the cardiovascular system
- develops strong joints
- builds muscle.

KNOWING HOW

to swim greatly reduces the risk of an emergency if your child accidentally falls in an unguarded pool or gets pulled into deep water by a rip current at the beach.

Swimming correctly gives your child the opportunity to participate in a range of popular sports, such as kayaking, water skiing, rowing, beach lifesaving and many more water sports.

In today's world which is full of technology, water sports and going to the beach are such fun family outings.

These memories are ones that stay with you for a lifetime and swimming is a sport that can be done for many years either with a club, friends, or by one self for fitness.

With summer just around the corner it is a great opportunity for the children to learn to swim or improve on their skills. Our lessons will continue until the end of the term.

Level 1 2 & 3 will be participating in their swim program at Lane Cove pool in Term 4.

Yours in sport

Mary.

THE MONTESSORI

FOOTBALL COURSE

by Margret Ranada Palma (3-6 Directress)

A day before the Montessori Football Course, I was in the classroom greeting my children farewell. I said goodbye to a child, saying: "I'm sorry Columbia did not make it to the Quarter Finals of the World Cup." He said: "Oh, Margret! I don't care about soccer! What's so fun about watching people run after a ball and shoot it in a goal for a loooong, loooong time? It's so boring." He rolls his eyes and gives me a smirk, this five-year old child. I put both my hands on my heart pretending like he's just shot me with an arrow and winced as if in pain. He laughed at this and asked why I love football so much. I told him: "Once you play football, you'll know why I love it so much. It's almost as if you asked me why I love teaching in our class so much. I love football as I love being in our class with all of the children."

And there I was, in the midst of the Montessori Football Course engrossed in Patrick Oudejans' presentations on football with quotations of Johan Cruyff and Maria Montessori, Jip Bartels' interjections with all his practical knowledge and experience in playing and coaching football, and Amy Kirkham's lectures on the Montessori philosophy. I had already known the moment I saw the Montessori Football banner at this year's Montessori Refresher Course, that this would be just the beginning of something huge! Montessori and Football. How would that work? That's what most people ask me. "No rules? No scores?"

In the five-day Montessori Football training course, I would look around at the eleven participants and three trainers. There was a varied mix of characters, personalities, and professions that surrounded me with different motives of taking the course, but mainly to learn how to setup a Montessori Football sports programme in their centres or schools. While I am a Montessori 3-6 trained teacher, one of the things I am passionate about outside my prepared environment is playing football which I have been playing the last 20 years. When the course came up, I never would have imagined that Montessori and football would be a match. Well, it never crossed my mind, having kept both passions separate.

In this introductory course, I have learned how the Montessori philosophy is incorporated with teaching football using Johan Cruyff's coaching methods as he developed youth academies in Europe after his career as a player. He was an advocate in developing "Total Football" by shifting the focus from a coach paradigm to a player paradigm.

When the course came up, I never would have imagined that Montessori and football would be a match. Well, it never crossed my mind, having kept both passions separate.



THIS IS ONE OF

the highlights of Montessori Football, the emphasis on a child centred approach on youth football development wherein we 'follow the child' as we do in the classroom. When the children join the program, you will need to ask yourself: Who is this child? Why is he/she here? What is he/she interested in? What are the skills he/she has?

Peer to peer learning is another aspect of the Montessori philosophy that is applied on the field, wherein children learn from each other in the mixed ages of a team, just as they are in the classroom, with their different planes of development. They learn to negotiate, communicate, problem solve, and empathise with each other. In turn, as individuals, learning and honing their own individual set of skills, they learn to self-regulate and self-motivate.

The prepared adult, or the Montessori teacher as the coach, gives individual feedback through observation. The coach is the guide who observes first, acts and reflects on how to guide the children in their development.

OUR MONTESSORI

prepared environment is the field or the available space where the program will be held, wherein the versatility of a sport or the activity becomes the defined area of learning, making necessary adjustments for the sport. The children's materials will vary with the equipment provided for each session. Just like in the classroom, movement is essential in learning. Movement is encouraged, refined, practised and polished with the drills and activities. A sports environment is dynamic, with the unlimited space provided but with boundaries set, there is still freedom with limitations, just as we witness in our classrooms.

Maria Montessori mentions in *Creative Development in the Child* (Vol. 1, p. 8) that *"All the movements of man are connected with the will, by which we direct movement. This will is closely connected with the intelligence. At the centre of man's great work is his intelligence. Therefore, intelligence comes before movement."* Johan Cruyff said: *"Every trainer talks about movement, about running a lot. I say don't run so much. Football is a game you play with your brain. You have to be in the right place at the right moment, not too early, not too late...Because you play football with your head, and your legs are there to help you. If you don't use your head, using your feet won't be sufficient. Why does a player have to chase the ball? Because he started running too late. You have to pay attention, use your brain and find the right position...."*

In the development of the total footballer, there are three areas of football skills: control of the mind, control of the body and control of the ball. These are part and parcel of Montessori Football's philosophy in guiding the whole child's development: mentally, physically, socially and psychologically. This can be accomplished with the partnership formed with the parents, the coach and the child, who ideally form the trinity of holistic learning in any environment.



AS A MONTESSORIAN,

there are boundless possibilities with the parallelisms of football and the Montessori philosophy. Football is a beautiful sport and we can tap into it to extend our imagination outside our classrooms as we apply our training and the core of Montessori principles onto the field to aid the children in their development to reach their full potential.

BURSARY APPLICATIONS FOR 2019

THE SCHOOL makes a number of Bursaries for financial assistance available to families each year. Applications are made in Term 4 to the Bursary Sub-Committee of the Board and close on 31 October each year. All applications are treated in the strictest confidence and are awarded on the basis of means testing and a strong commitment to the Montessori education system. A bursary will generally continue while the student is enrolled at the School and the bursary criteria continue to be met. Bursaries are reviewed annually. New bursary applications and annual bursary re-applications are made on the same form. Forms will be available in the school office or can be downloaded from the school website under the 'Enrol' tab in 'Bursaries'. Completed forms with accompanying documentation can be given in an envelope addressed to the Principal at the school office or emailed to adam.scotney@northsidemontessori.nsw.edu.au

Adam Scotney

Principal

OOSH UPDATE

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

by Surendrini Giritharan

(OOSH Coordinator)

We would like to welcome Grace and Ethan who have joined us this term. All have settled in and are mingling well with their peers.

Our morning and afternoon programs are based on 'My Time, Our Place' and each week we create a theme, based on this, including weekly cooking lessons. We have created a variety of activities to target everyone's learning capabilities, interests and strengths.

A healthy breakfast with yummy choices is being provided from 7am-7.45am every day.

Furthermore, a healthy menu has also been prepared for the afternoon, including daily nutritional requirements in addition to our usual nut free policy. As always, we ensure that we take good care of the children who have special dietary needs.

Knitting was introduced by the morning staff and it has become very popular during morning care.



KNITTING

was introduced by the morning staff and it has become very popular during morning care. The children make a variety of things. Staff and children have just finished their own colourful beanies for next winter!!

We have made some changes to our cooking program on Thursdays. Children have started creating their own cookbook. Each week's recipe will go in their personal cookbook and children will get to take them home at the end of term 4.

To create excitement and interest our free playtime activities are rotated, but there are some activities which will always be popular; building blocks, Lego, Duplo Lego, snakes and ladders, four in a row, colouring in, story time and a few more are very much enjoyed by the children. We also have a big variety of puzzles to challenge children of all age groups. Some children really love to spend time on their own or with help from staff doing different puzzles each day. They also challenge themselves to attempt puzzles a second time without any help from our staff.



LAST HOLIDAY PROGRAM,

Incursions were another big hit with visits from the reptiles and the Brain Game. Children were very excited to touch the reptiles, and even let them crawl on and around themselves and even put the snakes around their necks (don't worry these were the harmless variety!). This was loved by all age groups. Another new exciting incursion was the Brain Game. It was something new, interesting and loved by everyone. We will continue to do different activities and have surprising visitors for the future holiday programs. The feedback received from the children and the parents was very promising. Please see some of our highlights.

The children have started creating their own cookbook. Each week's recipe will go in their personal cookbook and they will get to take them home at the end of term 4.





A REMINDER

to all parents and carers whose children attend our holiday program:

- Please provide morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, water bottle and a hat.
- Since it is a long day for the children, they need lots of food during the day. However, some children never bring food for their afternoon tea. OOSH does not provide food for the holiday program. Please ensure you pack enough food for your children!

We also like to send a reminder to all the parents and carers that we have a nut free policy so please be sure to pack your children's food very carefully as we have children with severe allergies.

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff members for their commitment and support for a smooth flow during the term.

Have a safe Spring break and we look forward to another exciting busy holiday program!!!

Surendrini Giritharan.

We have a nut free policy... please be sure to pack your children's food very carefully as we have children with severe allergies.





THE ARTS

AND CREATIVITY IN GUNYA

The children have put an amazing amount of time, effort and thought into production this year.

by Sarah Bazylenko (6-9 Directress)

Creativity in Gunya comes in a variety of forms such as problem solving, critical thinking and implementing lateral thinking skills. Creative thinking improves reasoning, mood, behaviour and concentration. These skills were demonstrated again and again as the children designed and made props, costumes, had input into the choreography of the dances and wrote their speeches about Ben and Daisy's adventures while their active imaginations roamed free. Montessori placed great importance on imagination. *"The secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination. Our aim therefore is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorise, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his inmost core."* (Dr. Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential, p.11).

Creative thinking improves reasoning, mood, behaviour and concentration.

IN THE SECOND PLANE,

children can use their very solid understanding of reality that has been established in 3-6 to explore, using their imaginative and reasoning mind. This was shown as the class as a whole embraced the story the older children developed and represented it in their own individual way through the arts. We saw the profound interaction that exists between the cognitive and emotional processes when the children's imaginations were ignited, which needs to take place in order for them to develop a positive attitude to not only the arts but toward all fields of knowledge. It was wonderful to see the younger children practicing and watching the older, more capable dancers who readily offered their help throughout rehearsals. The excitement rose and rose until opening night where the children shone like the stars we know them to be.

We are excited about the Spring Fair and have been busily making friendship bracelets to sell. Our sense of community in Gunya is abundant.



OUR FATHERS

and carers day open morning was a success with the children enthusiastic to show their parents and carers their new found skills. The children accessed their artistic creativity while creating their 'love jars', cards and still life artwork for their tote bag gift. *"To confer the gift of drawing we much create an eye that sees, a hand that obeys and a soul that feels."* (The Advanced Montessori Method p. 289 of the Kalakshetra edition). These gifts were made with love from souls that feel deeply and honestly.

WE ARE EXCITED

about the Spring Fair and have been busily making friendship bracelets to sell. Our sense of community in Gunya is abundant.

Now that production is over creativity and imagination are still a big part of the classroom and are instilled into all our areas of study. The children have many ideas and solutions and think fluently, they have different ideas that cross categories or boundaries and are thus flexible thinkers, they have unique and unusual ideas so they are original thinkers and they add details to current ideas which allow them to be elaborate thinkers. These are the characteristics of creative thinking. We see this development on a daily basis and acknowledge these changes are unique to each child. We have a responsibility to observe and accept these changes then adjust our guidance accordingly.

Thank you to our parent helpers. We hope you all have a restful break.

Sarah, Claire, Janene, Soo-Jin and Sandra

STEPPING STONES



NIDO ROOM

It's all happening! As the outdoor play area opposite our environment is getting renovated, it is only natural for the children to want to observe, talk and imitate what they see. "Diggers," were the focus for many of the children for some time. We then saw a variety of tools and other machinery that the children took great interest in. We incorporated these into our indoor environment materials and took many opportunities to observe the real work occurring in front of us. It has been a great experience in itself and captured so much attention from the children. We are so excited to see it all occurring!

"Diggers," were the focus for many of the children for some time. We then saw a variety of tools and other machinery that the children took great interest in.



WE HAVE RECENTLY

celebrated many birthdays within the environment, many of the children starting with us when they were just 6 months of age and now beginning their move into the next environment. We not only just celebrated many of them turning two and transitioning into the Infant Community room but celebrated previous Nido children turning three and four in the older environments. It is a real learning journey here at Stepping Stones, a continuous and connected journey that we are lucky enough to be able to follow and continue to be part of. And of course, with children transitioning to the next environment, we begin to welcome new children and families and assist them in settling in and beginning their own individual journey with us.

Karla Moggs
Nido Room Leader



IC ROOM

Sustainability throughout is a big part of the IC room's future goal.

Earlier this year, we provided an atmosphere for children to examine, explore, protect, and nurture their surroundings with sensitivity to its relationship to the global environment. We decided to encourage more sustainable practices so that we could honour Dr. Maria Montessori's respect for the natural world and belief in its capacity to inspire learning.

ONE OF THE

ways we have presented opportunities to the children to preserve and protect their environment is by providing both indoor and outdoor garden plants for them to care for. The children are responsible for keeping them clean (wiping the leaves) and watering them each day to ensure they thrive and remain healthy. Other practices include conserving our resources by recycling and reusing materials whenever possible. We always encourage placing any paper waste into the recycle bins and we also love to create art and crafts with recycled goods. In the past paper towelling has been used in cleaning the environment, whereas now the educators model conservation by using colour coded cloths instead. The children have access to cleaning cloths on their Practical Life shelf for them to use whenever the tables need cleaning. The red cloths have become a big hit in the classroom and are used daily. We also believe that time spent outdoors is vital to the growth and development of children and their relationship to nature. We cannot wait to see and use our Centre's upgraded playground in the near future.

Jina Hwang

IC Room Leader



CASETTA

Casetta (Cottage/ Little house) has recently been introduced to Stepping Stones to cater for our children approximately aged between 3-4 years old. In the Casetta room we have 10 children with their own educator and we have been working closely together with both our Infant Community (IC) and our Casa family to work on bridging the gap between both rooms. Our aim is to make the transition into Casa less overwhelming for the children and more flowing. We have used aspects from both IC and Casa to create our routine for the day and make the day fun and full of hands-on learning.

Casetta have transitioned well into their new environment situated between IC and Casa and have recently been working on some individual development goals as well as class group goals. We are heavily focusing on using our words to communicate our needs and socialising with our new friends. Casetta is a mix of children from both our infant community and Casa, this means some of our Casetta children are creating new friendships and learning how to communicate their wants and needs with each other. We have been focusing on sharing and using our words to ask our peers for different works, making sure our friends are always happy and if not reassuring our friends through cuddles, communication, grace and courtesy.

Casetta (Cottage/ Little house) has recently been introduced to Stepping Stones to cater for our children aged between 3-4 years old.



A STRONG FOCUS

we have been working on developing is our fine motor muscle development through self-serving our morning tea and lunch. The children are encouraged to bring their plate to the table and develop their confidence holding the tongs firmly to serve their food all by themselves. Demonstrating independence, self-help practical life skills and strengthening our fine motor muscles.

Casetta have demonstrated their adaptiveness to new environments and situations very well and are consistently engaging in new learning experiences and independently discovering the world and environment around them. I look forward to the rest of 2018 discovering and learning more about the Casetta children and catering to their individual needs.

"Don't give up! I believe in you all! A person's a person, no matter how small!" - Dr Seuss

Amy Webb

Casetta Room Leader



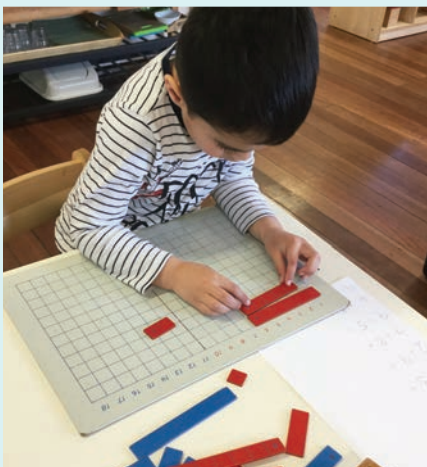
We are heavily focusing on using our words to communicate our needs and socialising with our new friends.



CASA

Alas with the welcoming of Spring, also comes the beginning of the last few months of the year 2018. It has been a year full of growth, development and learning - with knowledge built, understandings strengthened and friendships blossoming.

Over the course of this year, Casa has seen many changes - not only to our space - both indoors and outdoors, but also to materials, routines and staffing. Throughout all of this, the children have shown not only resilience but kindness, patience and respectfulness. I am very proud of their efforts in this regard, and know that these dispositions and behaviours will continue to serve them well throughout their lives.



...the children have shown not only resilience but kindness, patience and respectfulness



CASA HAS BEEN LUCKY

enough to participate and very much enjoy a wide range of experiences throughout 2018 - both within our learning environment and our interactions with the Montessori materials and equipment as well as a variety of extracurricular opportunities.

Favourites have included:

- A visit from the Reptile Man,
- Music with Marilyn (every Friday afternoon)
- Celebrating Mother's and Father's Day with special afternoon teas with our loved ones.

Each of these experiences offers a plethora and wealth of learning opportunities for the children, in the preparation, participation and finally on reflection. We are blessed in Casa, as is Stepping Stones as a whole, that we have the opportunity to engage in these experiences and that we have the support of staff, management, our lovely Director Belinda, and of course our Stepping Stones families. We look forward to continuing to work alongside you in 2019 and continuing to guide, direct and support your children as they grow, develop and learn.

"One test of the correctness of educational procedure is the happiness of the child"
- Maria Montessori (1870 -1952)

Bronte Nielsen
Early Childhood Teacher & CASA Room Leader



"One test of
the correctness
of educational
procedure is the
happiness of
the child"

- MARIA MONTESSORI
(1870 -1952)



20 BETTER THINGS TO SAY INSTEAD OF HOW WAS YOUR DAY?

Finding out from your child about his/her school day can be an exercise in frustration – both for you and your child. This is a common situation experienced by many parents – regardless of your child's age.

by Margaret Kroeger
(9-12 Directress)



Many of you might have heard the standard 'I don't know' often delivered as a single word in response to questions asked at collection time.

'How was your day?' can often elicit a one word response and if you ask 'What was school like today?' you might be lucky to get a non-committal grunt or a shoulder shrug. Many of you might have heard the standard 'I don't know' often delivered as a single word in response to questions asked at collection time. This is such a universal problem that Franklin Montessori School in Washington, included a section on how to communicate with children to maximise the flow of information in their 'Back to Montessori' School Guide

So how should you approach your child to elicit the best response? Well, according to Franklin Montessori staff there are some definite 'dos and don'ts'. They recommend you avoid the question, 'What did you today?' This asks the child to sum up a myriad of interactions, experiences and discoveries over multiple hours into a simple sentence. Even 'What work did you do today?' can be challenging. Your child may have been purposefully and industriously working all morning, covering a range of different key learning areas and you might still get the generic response of 'Nothing.' This can be quite disheartening and misleading for parents. Franklin Montessori recommends asking 'more open-ended, process focused questions that allow your child to actively reflect and make connections.' Ask questions that are designed to spark a conversation. If the dialogue comes to a halt, ask some follow up questions after giving your child some time to gather his/her thoughts. This could be as simple as 'Why?' and 'Like what....'. Ask questions that can take your child's thinking one step further and encourage reflection, meta-cognition, evaluation and empathy. These skills need time and experience to develop and require nurturing. You might still get a short or limited answer, but with time, these skills can develop. So, what should we ask?



Ask questions that can take your child's thinking one step further and encourage reflection, meta-cognition, evaluation and empathy.

FOR THE 3-6 CHILD,

why not try some of these suggestions from:

1. What is something that went really well today?
2. What was really fun today?
3. What new thing did you try today?
4. How did you help a friend today? How do you think they felt after you helped them?
5. How did you take care of your classroom today? What if no one had helped take care of the classroom today?
6. Did you look at a book today? What was it about?
7. How are you feeling now? What else?....What else?.....What else?
8. Did you need help with something today? How did you solve it?
9. What did you eat for snack today? Was anything especially delicious?

FOR THE 6-12

child, here are some questions to try:

1. What projects are you working on now? How do you feel about your effort?
2. How were you kind to your classmates today?
3. Tell me something that amazed you or surprised you today? Is it a fact or an opinion? How does this impact your life?
4. Is there something that you said or did that you would take back now? What would you do instead?
5. How was your friend (or directress, assistant, class pet) feeling today? How do you know?
6. Did anything happen today that you felt proud of?
7. Did you laugh today? What happened?
8. What was the best part of your day? Why?
9. Did you ask or hear a good question today? What was it?
10. Did you collaborate with someone today? How did that feel?
11. Did someone do something you admired today? What was it and why?



TIMING CAN

also play an important role in facilitating a meaningful conversation. Maybe your child may need time to consider a response. Collection at school can be hectic with lots of distractions. Maybe keep your questions till your child has settled back at home. Some families have shared a family ritual of asking about the 'roses and thorns' of the day during dinner time when everyone gets a chance to contribute in a more relaxed manner. For the older pre-adolescent child, conversations can blossom on a long car ride or while exercising together. We hope these tips will trigger a wealth of discussions.

Collection at school can be hectic with lots of distractions. Maybe keep your questions till your child has settled back at home.

6-12 PRODUCTION

DURING TERM 3 we had the pleasure of witnessing the presentation of the 6-9 and 9-12 Productions. For those of you fortunate enough to attend these during Week 5 you would agree that this was a very special evening.

Our 6-9 class presented 'The Adventures of Ben and Daisy' which was written by our level 3 students. This told the story of Ben and Daisy and followed their adventures through some wonderful and amazing lands. They visited the Land of Colours, Animals, Robots, Fairy tales, Chocolate, Origami, Cars, Snow, Creativity and of course Sweets. It was fantastic to see our children in the dances that accompanied each of these lands and for the wonderful narration of the story.

The 9-12 production followed on from the 6-9 performance and was Northside's take on Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. The wonderful land of Wonker's Chocolate Factory was brought to life through beautiful sets and costumes. The performances of the children who played the various characters in the story were wonderfully portrayed.

Well done to all our students who prepared and participated in this event. A big thank you also to the staff and parents who help make this production possible. It was a fantastic event.

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WHAT'S ON...

THESE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS



Festival Oasis DIY Hut - Wednesday 3rd-Friday 5th October

EMERGE FESTIVAL OASIS CHATSWOOD CONCOURSE

Wednesday 3rd - Friday 5th October, 11am - 7pm. Parents can kick back and relax while the children are entertained for free. • **DIY Hut** Slime Making: 3/10/18 11am-3pm, Tie Dying: 4/10/18 11am - 3pm (BYO t-shirt to dye), Dream Catcher: 5/10/18 11am - 3pm • **Dance Central workshops** Learn hip hop, popping, break dancing & other funky moves. Five 45 minute sessions run daily from 11am - 3pm, each featuring a different dance style. Bookings essential (Must be 8 years or older to attend). • **Movie Screening** Each night from 6 pm. Boss Baby - Wednesday 3 October, Emoji Movie - Thursday 4 October, Disney's Descendants - Friday 5 October.

SPOT ON CHILDRENS FESTIVAL FREE ACTIVITIES

Tuesday 9 - Saturday 13 October, 9:30am-3:30pm, Riverside Theatre, Parramatta. Free activities include Face Painting, Play Gym, Games, Craft with Anney Bee's Art Hive, Parramatta Library's Reading Tent & Chalkboard Art.

THE BIG ADVENTURE, SYDNEY PARK

Pedal, jump, dance or climb at this celebration of the outdoors and active living. For one day only Sydney Park will become an adventure playground for the whole family to explore on foot or by bike. Action-packed adventures include mountain boarding, parkour, break dancing, rock-climbing and footy clinics. Feel the breeze at the kite flying field or take some time out in a yoga class. Saturday 6 October 2018 from 9am to 4pm. Sydney Park Road, Alexandria.

FAGAN PARK OPEN DAY, GALSTON

On Sunday 30 September the Heritage Area of Netherby Homestead & Rural Museums in Fagan Park will be open. There will be a display of working restored Trucks, Tractors, and Stationary Engines including a Steam Engine, a working Hot Air Engine, a Road Roller, Horse-drawn Sulkies, a display of Hand Tools, and restored Farm Machinery to see. 9am - 4pm.



LEARN 2 SWIM WEEK
@ KU-RING-GAI FITNESS AND AQUATIC CENTRE

FREE* Swimming Lesson

Bookings necessary - Spaces limited

*Preschool to school age beginners

2 - 9 October 2018

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