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what makes montessori work?



A spontaneous, joyful interaction between children ages 6, 15 and 2.

Fall 2021 Newsletter #4

Time for Rejuvenating!

Hello Montessori educators and friends! Here is our first newsletter since January, 2020. Needless to say, I was a bit busy finishing up last year as a head of Forest Bluff School, directing most of my energy to keeping the school open and running smoothly for the students and their families. (I'm sure you were

The Newsstand

Dr. Angeline Lillard has been very busy in 2020 and the first half of 2021 collecting research with her colleagues at the University of Virginia! They have just published some terrific data that will help

too busy yourselves to notice the absence of a spring newsletter anyway!) I am pleased to announce that I am finished with that task and I'm now writing and speaking about Montessori education as my new full-time job. My first goal is to make this newsletter and my website places that provide inspiration and support for the work that so many of you are doing in your homes, classrooms and schools. And in the meantime, I am so happy to have handed Forest Bluff School over to the capable hands of our fantastic new head of school, Laura Earls, who is carrying on its traditions with renewed spirit!

For teachers, Montessori teacher-trainers, parents and heads of schools, this is a trying time. We've got to look to the children's simple joy for life in each day and their pleasures of learning and growing. Nothing is more important or can be more fulfilling than sowing seeds of hope for the future. The work you are doing is changing the world, because Montessori really works! It is the most effective educational approach out there because—unlike other models—every detail supports the philosophy. When you feel depleted, look to Maria Montessori's written work and observe the children's resilience and learning powers in play.

educators show evidence that supports Montessori's effectiveness. Dr. Lillard and her teams address two relevant, urgent topics: how Montessori students are faring on standardized tests, and how Montessori offers a more culturally responsive pedagogy when compared to the “no excuses” pedagogy that has been a competitor in the public school platform. Find, ["Standardized Test Proficiency in Public Montessori Schools"](#) here, published by *Journal of School Choice*, and ["An alternative to 'no excuses': Considering Montessori as culturally responsive pedagogy,"](#) here, which will be published by Howard University's *Journal of Negro Education*. You can also find many other articles on the website, [UVA Early Development Lab](#), such as "Math outcomes associated with Montessori education" published in *Early Child Development and Care*, and, "An association between Montessori education in childhood and adult well-being" which is under review and will be published soon by *Frontiers*. There is also exciting new research being released by [Solange Denevaud](#)! Search this researcher's name on Google Scholar to find her many fantastic studies conducted on the positive effects of Montessori education.

Insights From Maria

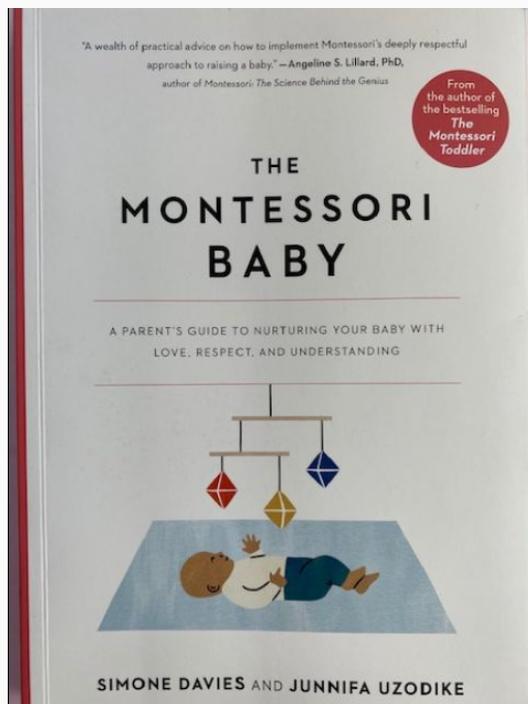
This is a perfect time to read or re-read, [Citizen of the World, Key Montessori Readings](#) published by the Montessori-Pierson Company. This collection of lectures and writings gives us a window into Maria Montessori's vision for peace through the detailed, practical implementation of the approach that fully recognizes the dignity and worth of every human being. The ways we learn to demonstrate the practical life exercises, grace and courtesy lessons, and even math and geography presentations for the children, ignites curiosity, passion and empathy. This is a call to look back into your training albums if you are a teacher, and for each of us to reflect on the details in the Montessori materials, their formal uses, and the stories we have learned that offer children the most profound information about our wonderful world.

Connecting the theory to the practical in real moments is where the magic happens!

"If in an educational approach one takes the child as a guide, it is obvious that the educator is led by the child instead of by preconceptions and prejudices. In fact, it is the child who will be the guide of education." –Montessori. 2019. *Citizen of the World*, p. 27.

[order the book here](#)

Words for Thought



AMI trained teacher Simone Davies, author of [The Montessori Toddler](#) and the blog, *The Montessori Notebook*, paired up with head of school, consultant, blog author and AMI trained at every level, Junnifa Uzodike, to write a wonderful new book, [The Montessori Baby](#). Easy to access and covering just about anything a new parent needs to know to have a fulfilling, enriching experience while learning to meet their infant's needs, this is a true gem. What I love most is that this book gives practical directions while infusing every page with the spiritual purposes behind the ways of doing things. The authors' voices are welcoming, inspiring and soothing, while informing parents and caregivers with Montessori's genius but simple ways to help our youngest humans. Thank you, Simone and Junnifa, for this immense gift. I hope it gets translated into every language! (Order book by clicking on the title/link above).

"Babies learn to persevere if we give them the chance." p. 5

Another timely read is a collection of letters translated by Carolina Montessori that transport us to another place and time in history: [Maria](#)

Maria Montessori
Writes to Her Grandchildren
letters from India, 1939-1946



translated and introduced by Carolina Montessori

[Montessori Writes to Her Grandchildren, Letters From India, 1939-1946](#), is a beautiful new release from 2020 that may have gone unnoticed while we had to focus on living through the world wide pandemic. But this is a perfect time to discover what life was like, how a family struggled, how a visitor discovered a new country and came to love it and the people around her. Maria Montessori's deep immersion in the Indian culture informed her view of the world and of humanity, and it influenced her development of the entire elementary curriculum as cosmic education. I highly recommend reading a few pages at bedtime to be transported to another time and place, and giving a copy as the perfect gift to a friend or fellow Montessori educator. (Order book by clicking on the title/link above).

Events

Not many in-person events are happening these days, but there are wonderful opportunities to get inspiration and information on line, through videos such as montessoriguide.org, subscribing to the [Forest Bluff School blog](#), following their informative weekly posts on instagram, and at virtual conferences and refresher courses. I recently attended the MPPI conference in DC to learn how to advocate for Montessori programs at the national, state and local level for both private and public schools. [The Montessori Public Policy Initiative](#) is doing amazing work and providing clear, incredibly helpful information for all of us! And stay tuned: I have finished the manuscript I've been writing about Montessori education and we're finally in the process of actively looking for a publisher!

