

Dear Families,

When I was in training to become a Montessori educator (way, way back when!) I was required to read a small book written by Dr. Montessori titled, To Educate the Human Potential. It was a real “eye opener.” The first thing it made me very aware of was that my responsibilities to the developing child did not require me to “teach” the child anything – *but rather to so guide it into those real life human experiences that would cause the child instinctively to begin to learn with his or her own volition*. I was to be for the children given to my care as a shepherd is to a flock of sheep – leading them to rich and nurturing green fields of pasture where they might freely eat and drink to their heart’s delight.

Dr. Montessori shared her scientific observations that every child has innate drives to fulfill its given life as a person – *that each child has very real and natural potentials waiting inside to be fulfilled* – and therefore is actually hungry to develop these human powers. As a doctor involved with the study of child development, she discovered that every child naturally absorbs the family’s language experientially and then actually masters this sophisticated learning challenge so much so that it can both understand and also speak that language perfectly by the age of two or three without ever being taught it directly. Learning one’s own language is a significant “miracle” of nature.

Since humans learn by experiencing, the parent’s role is to provide the baby and child a home environment rich in expressed language to be absorbed. “Pity the child born into a silent home,” Montessori would lament. Such a child would have an “empty well” of language and be surely deprived as a growing person. *So, she would advise parents to speak aloud a lot to their babies – read aloud to them – name and explain everything to them, engage them in conversations all the time*. They are living sponges made by nature to absorb and absorb and absorb. But they must have “good and plenty” to absorb. Born to be human persons every child craves language because to be a person one must communicate – speak, write, draw, dance, sing. Listening and communicating are intense instincts within every child. *There is nothing better to develop the intelligence and the person*.

As surely as a well prepared garden, rich with earth and moisture and sunlight, is essential if each little seed if it is to “quicken” its internal life-springs -- to send out its roots and sprouts -- so too the child waits hungrily for a school rich in language to release the POW of its human potential. I go into their gardens here at our school as often as I can and tell them stories full of life and vivid language. Boy, do they eat these stories up! Not only that, but my storytelling releases the **magic** of their **imagination**, and they instinctively begin to tell and then to write and then to read their own stories with personal joy.

It is positive, genuine human experiences that release – that bring out – that educate your child’s human potential. Your child is full of potentials. Our role as Montessori parentcators and educators is to daily work at helping your child actualize these human potentials as fully as possible. What a sacred, happy job!

Peace,
Paul