

Dear Families,

My many years as a Montessori educator have proven to me that the best way to help a child become a successful life-long learner is to provide the kind of learning opportunities in this now that will build upon his or her self-esteem and happiness. Every child is born with a zest for life and a proclivity for joy. Our role is to keep nurturing both. This is why our Montessori didactic materials and work projects are designed to encourage active and self-directed learning for each individual child. And because to be a person requires independence and communal life, our Montessori three year age span learning environments also always are prepared to provide a balance of opportunities for both individual mastery and small group “working together” learning projects. Not traditional classrooms, our rooms are characterized as being “family-like” places where each learner is allowed to progress at his or her own developmental pace of learning and to do so within an up-spiraling, non-competitive, multi-faceted curriculum that hopefully fits them as well as their clothing.

You see, Dr. Montessori’s great discovery was that our children are born with a natural and powerful drive to learn human skills – which means they come to school with a self-motivation to master what we term “academic skills” if such are presented to them in interesting, experiential ways. Rather than merely sitting at a desk and listening to a teacher, she said, children learn best by moving and doing their learning activities just as they do at home. Learning is meant to be a personal joy to them. Developing their full human potentials is not only something we want as educators but existentially a work that they the children innately desire ever since they began their miraculous journey into personal life. Children deeply want to construct themselves. This is so because every child is gifted by nature with an inclination to achieve mastery of human life, and they can only accomplish this by coming to understand their surrounding environment experientially with all their senses and with their heart/mind/soul as well.

Because of the naturalness of human learning, our role as parent/cator or educator is much like that of a gardener who prepares the seedbed for the specific needs of the individual plants. The knowing gardener does not rub the soil into the roots nor inject the water with a needle into its woody heart but trusts in the inner wisdom of the tiny developing plant to know how to get what it needs for life and confidently lets it grow happy-go-lucky in his garden. So must we with our children just give them space and the liberty to grow within the home and learning environments that we have prepared for them with understanding and with love. Deep down there is great power and purpose in life. Let us witness it happening for our children with joy.

**Peace,
Paul**