

Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 17:14

Subject: What is happening in our Seahorse Classroom

Dear Seahorse Families,

It is our third week(tenth day)of school, and you might wonder, especially for our new families, what is happening in our Seahorse classroom and why it is happening/what the reasons are? First, I want to thank you all for patiently waiting and following and helping us by supporting your child with transition, making sure your child is getting enough sleep at night, packing nutritious snacks/lunch. And of all, cooperating with us so that we can serve your child better.

I would appreciate you all take some time to read my long email. Please feel free to communicate with me if you have any questions or doubts.

I want to start with the characteristics of the Montessori Primary Classroom(it applies to any Montessori classroom). Following are a few significant features and purposes and the practices of Montessori Education.

Multi-age group: in our classroom, we have 4,5, and almost six-year-old students. We have students from last year.

Purpose: The younger students learn from the leader/Kindergartner and sometimes the younger students teach others after they master the lessons through practice. If a child is ready to move on to the next level, they can learn more from the materials and the teacher. There are no grade-level boundaries, and our classrooms have advanced Montessori materials and trained guides.

Follow the child: We, as Montessorians trained to follow the child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development and guide/teach them accordingly.

Purpose: Every child is a unique individual, so thus their developmental milestones and their learning pattern. In Montessori, we follow each child's needs and present/teach lessons/concepts to fulfill their needs. But in the end, the goal is to help them achieve where they should be in academics and emotionally and socially. Montessori sees the child as a whole.

Prepared Environment: When the classroom environment is well prepared with didactic materials and is sequentially placed on the shelf, the classroom will function beautifully. The child-size furniture and clutter-free Environment will be less distraction for learning to occur.

Observation: Observations are part of our everyday routine. It helps us learn about every student in the classroom environment and their developmental stages and learning pattern.

Repetition: Children at a young age learn through repeated practices. The children can work with the same lessons as long as they want and can choose the same lesson as many times as they want to work with the lessons. The repetition of the work will lead them to self-mastery of the concept and finding creative ways to use the lessons/give ideas for extension works.

Materials: The Montessori classrooms have hands-on materials for concrete and abstract works. Every material on the shelf carries purpose(s) to teach various concepts and help the children develop physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills. Dr. Montessori believes that learning should happen through experiencing our five senses and through didactic materials. "Hands are the instruments of man's intelligence." One of my favorite quotes from Dr. Montessori.

Movement: Purposeful movement is encouraged in a Montessori classroom; if it has a purpose and serves the learning, it is considered purposeful.

Independence: Teaching/guiding the children to develop as independent individuals is one of Montessori education's core values. Our Practical Life area lessons help the children build independence. The children feel more confident when they do their 'work' independently.

Respect and care: Respect and care for self, others, and the Environment are vital for Montessori education.

So, what is happening in our Seahorse classroom?

We are all practicing learning our classroom routine, procedures, tools/words we use, and building a strong connection, and supporting our young friends' emotional and social needs to feel comfortable and safe in our classroom environment. For all that to happen, we need time, consistency, and practice.

We are also working on using our words/talk to express our feelings in all circumstances. I introduced 'Peace Rose' to use to solve any problems/misunderstanding with another person. Please ask your child about the 'Peace Rose' in our classroom and the 'invisible bucket.'

Montessori in action: Because of the safety of the children and all of us, the children have been offered personal space with a table, chair, and a shelf. We are slowly opening shelves (one of our regular practices), and children choose lessons from the common/sharing shelves after receiving the presentation. This method we started last school year for a safe and successful year. When the Environment is prepared, and the procedures and the boundaries are clear, the children will connect and function happily in that Environment. In a regular school year, we change shelf layout and rotate lessons on the shelves whenever we see children need a change or seasonal themes or whenever there is a necessity for classroom management. But now, we change our students' personal spaces and the lessons on their shelves instead. Either way, Montessori practices are in action.

Now let us walk into the general question we all have, the academics! The children learn various concepts/subjects through hands-on materials and a sequence of works. For example, learning to read has many steps (identifying that the language we speak is made up of words, letters, syllables, the connection between the letter sounds and symbols, etc.) and involves a series of lessons. If a child misses a step or sequence, he/she will get frustrated, and the learning will burden that child. Our main goal is to help the children love what they learn, 'the love of learning.' Dr. Montessori carefully created this education method to serve the child(adult) of the young brain.

Thank you for taking the time to reach the end!

Have a great evening,

Thank You,

Ms. Karthi