



Love Montessori

The Magazine



Issue One: Spring 2014



"Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavour always to keep burning within him the light which is called intelligence"

Dr Montessori

Welcome to the first issue of our new Montessori magazine. We hope that it will inspire you and give you an insight into the wonderful world of Montessori and the child.

Love Montessori will give you a window into the Montessori classroom, the philosophy, the history and how you can enjoy the benefits of the Montessori method in your own home. So join us on our Montessori journey of discovery.



Rhonda Davison



From the Director of LSM

Little Sweethearts Montessori was established seven years ago to deliver an authentic Montessori Programme to preschool children in Tauranga. We are very proud of our achievements over these years and there are many LSM Graduates now performing very well across a broad spectrum of endeavours and looking back on their positive experiences at LSM.

To augment our 3 LSM Schools here in Tauranga we have now established our own Montessori Teacher Training School, Montessori Centre Aotearoa (MCA.) MCA is affiliated with the London based Montessori Centre International (MCI) of which Rhonda is an accredited trainer. This MCI connection has enabled MCA to prioritise the essential elements of the quality Montessori Programme which LSM constantly strives to deliver. In this way LSM is in a privileged position. Since the beginning of this year we have been providing a very high standard of regular workshops, professional development and mentoring to all our directresses. Commitment to professional growth is now an expectation of all our Montessori practitioners. On this basis we are delighted to share the foundation principles of Little Sweethearts Montessori and in this magazine, the fundamental principles underpinning "The Little Sweethearts Montessori Way."

Symon Armstrong
Director



Helen Keller, a student of Montessori said,

"Mathematics will never make them loving, nor will accurate knowledge of the size and shape of the world. We shall never properly develop the minds of our little ones whilst we continue to fill their minds with the so-called basics".

At Little Sweethearts Montessori we are proud to aspire to deliver the Montessori Method as Dr Montessori intended:

- We strive to avoid our role being purely presenting the basics.
- We strive to support each child in proactively embracing his own journey towards acquiring a full array of life skills.

Montessori makes a difference

Montessori children often stand out from the crowd. Graduates of a well presented Montessori programme tend to be compassionate and empathetic, sensitive to the natural world and to others. They sense purpose in life and feel a sense of belonging and social connectedness. This charges them with optimism, courage and inner peace. These children go on to achieve academically, yet it is the love and care they show for each other and their world that compels them to contribute and strive to make the world a better place for all. They tend to become confident, competent, self-reflective, and thereby successful. They are happy to learn from mistakes. Montessori students tend to become self-directed, composed and morally independent. Work becomes enjoyable. These are the children who make a difference now and will continue making differences as adults.



Normalisation is the key

This well-adjusted, socially connected and self-motivated individual is what Maria Montessori termed a 'normalised' child. Trevor Eissley, in his book "Montessori Madness" explained that, "Normalisation occurs once children are regularly choosing their work freely, spontaneously and without help and once they are concentrating on that work for an extended period."

At Little Sweethearts Montessori we are committed to the path of normalisation for each child and will not compromise this objective. This demands that our Montessori Practitioners are committed to

reflective practice, and demonstrate that the key ingredients for normalisation to occur need to be evident in our everyday life as a Montessori community. This means children's work represents everyday life in our LSM community.

You will see a balanced approach to a child's development that does not rely on rote learning. You will see us watching and waiting patiently for the child to make academic progress. That is why you will see us expectantly waiting for the five year old child to fulfil their daily plan to work in all areas of the curriculum together with taking on leadership roles as peer tutors in our LSM community.

How children develop normalisation

Working primarily with the activities of everyday living and sensorial materials are the keys to normalisation and the foundation of the Montessori programme. It is the goal of the Montessori Practitioner to ensure that the Montessori child is developing their skills of concentration and the other key ingredients to ensure that they have a balanced 'brain diet'. In order for a child to develop 'Normalisation' it is also essential that they are immersed in the Montessori Community environment. This is the reason we encourage

consistent attendance at LSM with our indicative recommendations being four sessions a week by age 3 years and working up to four full days by age of five.



The child's work

Maria Montessori states that normalisation "is the single most important part of our work". Helping the child lay this foundation paves the way for success. The child is able to work independently, explore the material they have been presented, working through trial and error thereby paving the way for their natural explosion into all the academic areas. This

is preparation for life as the child does not rely on the Directress presenting Maths and Language materials to ensure that they are prepared for primary school – their knowledge and development in these academic areas are natural outcomes of a good Montessori process.

What we do

Our Directresses observe, observe, observe and continue to base each child's next learning activity on these observations.

We follow the child and our support is focused on ensuring children have all the necessary ingredients for normalisation. We therefore look for concentration, independence, cycles of repetition, exactness and precision, order, movement, exploration, free choice, working with others, time to master, and cycles of activity.

For the child, these ingredients are the 'brain food' from which the explosion into all curriculum areas spontaneously occurs. Helping the child to develop these key ingredients provides the starting place for our planning and presentations.

Together with our three hour work cycle and six hour day it is the skill of the Directress to be 'in touch' with individual children without losing touch with the class as a whole. She must choose what presentations are needed and when they are needed. This is critical because if presenting the apparatus to the child is the main priority (rather than observing the child to determine just what apparatus to present) then that Directress has missed the point of the whole programme. A Directress who simply looks at the materials before looking at the child, and sees presenting as a main priority above connecting with the child, has not embraced the LSM way.



Our Directresses understand that our very specialised resources are not to be deployed simply as tools to be mastered but as keys that a child uses to independently unlock their personal learning.

Why the Montessori World is so excited!

Montessori practitioners talk of “Normalisation.”

Today’s Neuro Developmental world talks of “Executive Functions.”

Whatever the name used, we are talking about how our brains manage attention, emotion and behaviour in pursuit of our goals. These are proven to be better predictors of children’s success in their school and life than a high IQ.

Stephen Hughes, Neuro Psychologist and Montessori Dad, is excited by the positive outcomes for children’s learning and brain development that he has seen as a direct result of children’s Montessori experiences. A recent scientific study of outcomes of good Executive Functions on Montessori five year olds showed they had better performance on standardised tests of reading and maths, they engaged in more positive interactions, showed more advanced social cognition executive control and more concern for fairness and justice. In conclusion they had superior outcomes.



This table shows the similarities between a child with normalised behaviour as a result of being immersed in a Montessori environment and a child with good Executive Functions. Maria Montessori knew over a hundred years ago what the Neuro Developmental world is discovering today.

Speaking the Same Language	
Normalisation	Executive Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is joy and tranquility and happiness• Children have concentration• Able to handle frustrations• Can make rational choices• Can adapt• Have self discipline• Independent• Have positive self image and esteem• Aware and considerate of others• Secure within themselves• Helpful, sense of justice sustained by co-operation and mutual support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show good judgment and planning• Foresight• Organisation• Self awareness• Imagination• Monitor progress to achieve a goal• Self Control• Dependable• Accurate• Responds to needs• Takes responsibility

When emphasising the development of normalisation or executive functions, alongside academic knowledge, the outcomes speak for themselves. The Montessori classroom, with its repetition of activities, multisensory experiences and self-guided learning creates the perfect recipe for brain development and the resulting attainment of normalisation and robust executive functions.



Beginners Nest

Our Beginners Nest aims to offer the best beginning for the young child. From a very early age a child wants to do things for themselves, and our Beginners Nest gives a child the opportunity to grow in independence and confidence, allowing them to explore and make choices in a small, safe environment.

It is recognised that a child's intellectual capabilities develop more rapidly between birth and six than at any other time in their lives as they absorb knowledge and learn spontaneously.

The Beginners Nest is a prepared Montessori environment that answers the specific needs of children from twelve months onwards. This home away from home offers activities such as washing, cleaning, cooking, sweeping, puzzles and other materials to aid a child in the development of their senses and co-ordination.

Great care is shown how to work and play together, how to handle materials to improve co-ordination and to tackle problems in a logical, orderly manner. Children can work at their own pace and are given the freedom to choose their own activities and work without interruption.

Meeting the needs of individual children, the Beginners Nest also offers a calm, secure environment where a child's sense of order, desire to be independent and to help out is acknowledged. Through interacting with the environment and other children, under the guidance of the Directress a child will grow in confidence and their potential begin to unfold. A preparation program, the Beginners Nest also gives a child a gentle introduction to Montessori foundation before moving into the preschool at Little Sweethearts Montessori.

Practical Life is the most important area of learning for the child in the Beginners Nest. These activities are designed to help answer the younger child's inner drive to do things for themselves. A child will have the opportunity to develop the skills to look after themselves and their environment. Emphasis is placed on the importance of working together and showing consideration for each other. Sharing is also a natural consequence in the Beginners Nest as only one set of each Montessori material is provided. Children will learn appropriate greetings, are shown how to move quietly about the classroom, wait patiently, push in a chair and how important it is not to disturb their friends who are working. They will also have the time to laugh, learn and grow together – the perfect beginning for life.





Love the Method

The foundation of the Montessori Philosophy is based on the shared understanding that every child carries within them the person they will become.

The Montessori environment supports the child's physical, intellectual and spiritual capacity with the ability to discover their potential through freedom. This freedom is not "liberty" to do as they will, but a freedom achieved through an internal order and self discipline.

To achieve this order and inner discipline requires work by the child. Every child responds to their environment by an interior stimulus or drive called the 'horme'. This is a spontaneous unconscious urge and the Montessori environment helps to build this inner person so that and when a child engages in their freely chosen work we see a child who is interested in things, ordered, active and shows "normalised" behaviour. Maria Montessori saw normalisation as the most important outcome of her work with the child. So not only does work assist the building of the inner person, it also re-orders the inner person, becoming an instrument of normalisation or wholeness for both the child and the whole community.



Children love to work!

The word work has a different connotation to the child than it does to the adult. Whilst adults may find 'work' a chore, children approach 'work' as an activity that they are driven to do.

When an adult sees a grubby table top, hopefully they will clean it. The child wants to clean the same table top for the pure pleasure of the activity. It may take some time for us to get our heads around this concept of work, but this is important, as work is the activity a child chooses to form themselves.

We tend to think that self-esteem is built by making everything easy for a child and making sure they never fail. i.e. If they never encounter hardship or conflict, they'll never feel bad about themselves. Children learn self-esteem from mastering difficult tasks. When we step in to do the hard jobs for a child then we can do them a dis-service as we can rob them of the opportunity to contribute to life.

In the Montessori environment the most important work a child can engage in is activities of everyday living or Practical Life. Maria Montessori herself stated, "no other occupation which could be undertaken by the child at this stage (3-6) could be more important for their whole development – physical, mental and moral than these exercises of Practical Life, as they are called".

Practical Life activities are based on the domestic routines in the Montessori environment which a child would see as a normal part of family life – in fact one child once called them activities for 'practising life'. This is in fact what the Practical Life activities are in our Montessori environment. The essential tasks of cleaning, washing, ironing, gardening and cooking play a pivotal role in ensuring the

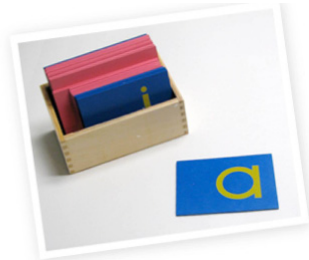
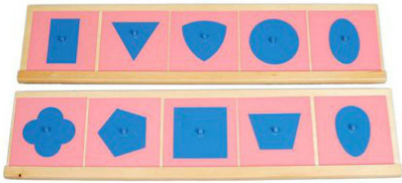
smooth running of the community whilst helping a child to develop life skills along with independence, a sense of value. These tasks form the foundation for academic learning.

Practical Life is an important building block for the child's development. Practical Life gives children the opportunity to develop basic skills such as pouring, spooning and cutting. The key to the child developing these skills is that the child can then cook, clean and confidently help throughout their environment.

Practical Life is a complete brain food, giving the child everything they need. Each activity has a beginning, middle and end and as the child repeatedly works with a Practical Life activity it helps develop concentration, perseverance, the inner discipline to complete the activity with precision and exactness and the desire to repeat it. This is what Maria Montessori called Normalised behaviour.



Next Apparatus Workshop



Literacy

Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th October 2014

Full weekend workshop cost \$287.50 including GST. Includes workshop catering and shared accommodation for Saturday night.

Enrolments close Friday 3rd October. Please visit our website www.montessoricentre.co.nz to enrol or enquire through 07 571 0729.





Love the Faith

Nurturing a child's spirit is and always has been the most important thrust of Montessori's teachings. Montessori saw the spiritual as a basic human energy that gives meaning to our lives.

Montessori is often known as the method with wonderful materials whereas Maria Montessori's desire was to create a better world through nurturing each child's spirit. This happens as each child knows that what they do makes a difference to the community, that their real value lies within them rather than in what they possess.

Children's spiritual growth comes from giving them the time and silence for reflection, enabling them to appreciate all things. At the same time the values of tolerance, compassion, peacefulness, kindness and service to others are all encouraged.

When a Montessori environment focuses on supporting the development of normalisation for each child, nurturing the spirit goes hand in hand. The Montessori philosophy of education believes

that every child carries within them the person they will become. To develop their physical, intellectual and spiritual capacity at Little Sweethearts Montessori the Village, we have a wonderfully quiet retreat as part of our preschool environment.

A traditional aspect of the Montessori experience, designed by Dr Montessori and developed by Sofia Cavaletti and Giovanna Gobbi in Rome, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is based on Maria Montessori's self-teaching principles and the traditions of the Catholic church that appeals to the child's spiritual awareness.

In this photograph, one of our LSM children is in our Atrium, where he is attracted to the Good Shepherd and Jesus' abiding love for his sheep in our Atrium. Children develop a special love the Good Shepherd even before they realise they are the sheep, hearing the story, reflecting what they have heard and then re-enacting it themselves.



*Little Sacred
Hearts Atrium*

The most meaningful aspect of Montessori for me as a parent is the understanding that from a very young age children want to act independently and do things for them themselves.

By setting up a home environment that gives children the opportunity to take charge of their self-care the home environment can help the child develop independence and self-esteem. By designing an environment that helps facilitate care of self we are encouraging independence that can only make our lives together easier, both in the short term and long term!

Our Love Parenting course will look at how we can support independence in the home so please register your interest by the end of September. In the meantime, here are some ideas you can get started on!

Get your child to help you wash the car and learn the vocabulary of the parts of the car. With this and other tasks it's important to focus on the process more than the shiny waxed finish!

Place a small jug of water or juice on a low refrigerator shelf and a glass in a low place so your child can independently get a drink.

Did you know?

It was a parent's suggestion to Dr Montessori to add sandpaper letters into the Montessori classroom? These parents then helped Maria Montessori design the first set of sandpaper letters for the children to use. These are now central to the Language curriculum...so don't underestimate the importance of parent ideas!!!





Art in Montessori

Our Montessori environments are attractive, organized and beautiful. They inspire both the adult and the children to look after them with a sense of responsibility and delight.

Maria Montessori wanted the children to have the most beautiful pictures in their environment and you will see this beautiful painting by Raphael, called Madonna of the Chair, in each of our LSM Schools.

Maria Montessori in her book "The Method" explains , "In this beautiful conception Raphael has shown us not only the Madonna as Divine Mother holding in her arms the babe who is greater than she...In addition to this wonderful symbolism, the picture has great value as being one of the greatest works of Italy's greatest artist...and if the day shall come when the Children's Houses are established throughout the world, it is our wish that this picture of Raphael shall have its place in each of the schools".

Directory

Little Sweethearts Montessori Beginners Nest & Preschool

From 2 to 6 years. Monday to Friday 9:00am until 3:30pm



586 Fraser Street

Greerton

Phone 07 579 9113

Email enquiries.tauranga@littlesweethearts.co.nz

Little Sweethearts Montessori Beginners Nest & Preschool

From 2 to 6 years. Monday to Friday 9:00am until 3:30pm



38 Goucester Road

Mount Maunganui

Phone 07 572 0300

Email enquiries.mount@littlesweethearts.co.nz

Little Sweethearts Montessori Beginners Nest, Preschool & Atrium

From 18 months to 6 years. Monday to Friday 8:30am until 4:30pm



Historic Village

159 Seventeenth Avenue

Tauranga

Phone 07 578 7447

Email enquiries.village@littlesweethearts.co.nz

Montessori Centre Aotearoa

Directress Training Centre



Phone 07 571 0729

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Web www.montessoricentre.co.nz