

Palm Valley Montessori School

Newsletter

March 2011

Dear Parents,

The following article is taken from Montessori Insights for Parents of Young Children by Aline Wolf. Nurturing concentration is the essence of what we do at PVM. It is the teacher's duty to match the child to the appropriate material in the prepared environment and then guard the child's concentration. The rest will follow. As Lee Iacocca said, "The ability to concentrate and to use your time well is everything."

Nurturing Concentration

There is very little, if any, learning without concentration. In the Montessori classroom for three to six year-olds, lengthening each child's attention span is a long-range purpose of nearly every activity. For example, if a child is doing the dishwashing exercise, she is not only having a sensorial experience with the water, improving her coordination, and learning to follow a sequence of actions, but, most importantly, she is extending her concentration on one activity to ten or fifteen minutes. Respect for each child's attention is very evident throughout the room, as a Montessori teacher rarely interrupts a child who is focused on her work.

Cultivating a child's power of concentration actually begins before the child is three. Concentration is a fragile mindset that can easily be interrupted by adults who do not understand that age 0-3 is the formative stage for this lifelong power. For example, a young child may be floating sticks in a puddle or lining up pots and pans on the kitchen floor when her caretaker decides, "Enough of this mess," and abruptly ends the activity.

To interfere with a child's concentration in order to change his clothes or clean up a cluttered floor is to put appearances ahead of the child's psychic development. If a child's cycle of activity is interrupted, the results are a deviation of behavior, aimlessness and loss of interest...So whatever intelligent activity we witness in a child- even if it seems absurd to us... we must not interfere; the child must be able to finish the cycle of activity on which his heart is set.

Although deep respect for concentration is the ideal, there are times in every family when a child's activity must be brought to an end such as when dinner is ready or it is time to leave for school. When this happens it is best to alert the child ahead of time or give an alternative. "Five more minutes to build with your blocks." After five minutes you can say, "Do you want help putting away your blocks or can you do it yourself?" Or "I know you are trying to finish your puzzle, but it is time to go. You may leave it on the floor and finish it after school."

Because no one acting on the child from the outside can *cause* (force) him to concentrate, Montessori cautions us to take special care of a child's *spontaneous* periods of concentration. If you frequently encroach on them, the essential tool for learning may not flourish. If nurtured, seeds of concentrated activity can blossom, in time, into healthy periods of work and study.

**Regards,
Ms. Eva**

Mark Your Calendars! Families are invited to attend Spring Fling on Friday, March 11th from 10:30-12:30. This will be an outdoor field day to enjoy the beautiful March weather and celebrate the coming of Spring. The children will participate in races, songs, obstacle courses, and games. Please dress your child in play clothes that are okay to get messy. There's no need for a lunchbox on this day. We will all enjoy a potluck picnic lunch on the playground at 11:15. There are sign-up sheets for food and volunteers in the lobby.

Fond Farewells and New Friends:

Last month, we said goodbye to one school family when Austin Lewis moved to China. He is attending a bilingual Montessori school there. Another friend, Sonya Lobo, will be moving to Australia next week. We wish these friends and their families much happiness in their new adventures. The moves opened up two new spots at PVMS so we recently acquired Rachel Hartwig and Mason Lund. Welcome!

**Palm Valley Montessori School
will be closed
Monday, March 14-
Friday, March 18
for Spring Break.**

Artist of the Month: Claude Monet (1840 –1926) was a founder of French impressionist painting. The term Impressionism is derived from the title of his painting *Impression, Sunrise*.

Composer of the Month: Igor Stravinsky(1882 –1971) was a Russian-born composer, pianist, and conductor. His most famous works include three ballets: *The Firebird*, *Petrushka*, and *The Rite of Spring*.

Thank You:

Thank you to the following families for ordering with the For Small Hands catalog- Urcuyo, Curry, Foster, Geer,

Parent Organization:

We are off to a great start!

Serena Webbe (Teddy's mom) is designing a new and improved school website. Soon we will have an exclusive online group for parents to share contact information, pictures, and ideas.

Jaime Geer (Colin's mom) is organizing Scholastic book orders. Those will be coming soon to a cubbie near you.

We have a group working on a yearbook too.

The first big event is a fundraiser and a social in one. **We have the 1st Annual Palm Valley Montessori Parent**

Organization Yard Sale scheduled for **Saturday, April 24th**. We are trying to raise the \$750 (plus the legal fees and the accountant fees) needed to establish our organization as a legitimate non-profit entity. Please consider donating some unwanted items. You can drop donations off during school hours in the first stall of the school garage. If you need a truck to pick up a larger item, please contact Patty Cantu (Max's mom) at 623-414-5055. Volunteers are also needed to sort, price, and display items and make and hang signs. Some parents will work the yard sale while others supervise children on the playground. Breakfast will be potluck style.

Would you like to get in on the work, *uh*, I mean, fun?!

**Our next meeting is scheduled for
Wednesday, March 24th at 7:00pm.**