

Parenting and Teaching

*I never teach my pupils;
I only attempt to provide
the conditions
in which they can learn.*

— Albert Einstein

"Montessori" Materials

Since many people come to Michael Olaf because they are interested in "Montessori materials" we include an overview of two categories of these materials.

Didactic Materials: These are materials that were developed by Dr. Montessori for use in schools. These include the *sensorial* (color tablets, red rods, etc), and *math* (bead frame, square root materials, etc.) materials. They are made by approved (and sometimes unapproved) companies around the world and have been tested for 100 years and found to work in the classroom. They are not useful in the home because they are of no value without a teacher trained on the relationship of their use to the needs of and development of the child. Materials in *Child of the World* are appropriate at home and do not require teacher training.

Adult-found, or Adult-made Materials: During training the teacher is

taught to analyze the culture of his or her class and find local materials, or make materials for the classroom.

She learns to seek out the best *local* books, trays, cleaning supplies, etc. to link the child to that particular beauty and daily life in which they live. This creates a beautiful and unique environment instead of a mass-produced, boring look. Parents at home can do the same, creating a family-centered learning environment at home.

In the Michael Olaf catalogues we offer high-quality examples of items that are useful for the home, and the classroom.

The most help that the Michael Olaf Company has given to parents and teachers over the years is in finding culturally rich books, materials for the classroom and the home in the areas of music, art, history, geography, physics, biology. We are also known for the quality of furniture, storage materials, toys, games, puzzles, practical life materials, and books. Everything that we carry is user-friendly for parents in the home and extended day programs in Montessori schools.

The Supermarket Effect: Many parents and teachers find themselves tempted to purchase more materials than are needed. This is not only wasteful, but it is damaging to the child's development.

Montessori classrooms, where the only materials are those introduced

during teacher training, prove to have children who are happy, focused, and with the longest periods of concentration—the best results overall. It is the same in the home. Less is better.

At Michael Olaf we reject many, many books and materials that we review, even though we see them for sale in other well-known catalogues. Our goal is to set a standard in quality, and to present an overview for creating the best, calmest, most beautiful learning and living environment for children possible.

Parenting / Teaching

Through our children, we parents and teachers are the architects of the future of humanity. As we go about our daily lives in the presence of children we are constantly teaching by our own words, thoughts, and behavior.

Education is sometimes narrowly defined as the teaching of math, language, sciences and the arts, but the most important subjects to be mastered are: how to be happy, to be a compassionate friend, to express care through thoughtfulness and good manners, to identify a problem and work hard to solve it, to know how to be happy.

More than facts, we must help our children develop a love of learning, an ability to make intelligent and responsible choices, to concentrate and focus, and to do one's best to complete a task to the satisfaction of oneself rather than to please someone else.

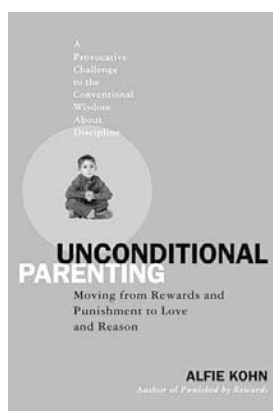
UNCONDITIONAL PARENTING: Moving from Rewards and Punishments to Love and Reason

Most parenting guides begin with the question "How can we get kids to do what they're told?"—and then proceed to offer various techniques for controlling them.

In this truly groundbreaking book, nationally respected speaker at Montessori conferences, Alfie Kohn, begins instead by asking "What do kids need—and how can we meet those needs?" What follows from that question are ideas for working with children rather than doing things to them. This is an eye-opening book that will reconnect readers to their own best instincts and inspire them to become better parents. 272 pages, softcover 9.5" x 6".

GB075

\$14.00



HOW TO TALK SO KIDS WILL LISTEN AND LISTEN SO KIDS WILL TALK

After all these years this is still the book we recommend most to both parents and teachers in order to improve understanding and communication between adults and children.

The tools provided are appropriate for kids of all ages. We are still, after 22 years, using them. The authors have often been guest speakers at Montessori conferences.

The book is based on the practice of PET (Parent Effectiveness Training). To find a course phone: 800-628-1197.

GB270

\$15.95



Concentration & Contemplation

It was the great discovery of Dr. Montessori that after completing a prolonged period of deep concentration and contemplation, a child often expressed a great joy and a desire to help others. Perhaps this is what adults who daily make time for prayer or meditation feel, and why we think of them as happier, more peaceful, and in some ways better human beings than those of us who just rush from one task to the next.

Lessons on morality, books on morality, gold stars, these exterior inducements to happiness and goodness are never as successful as a good night's sleep or a long period of concentrated work or contemplation during which the mind can process the day's input, solve problems at a deep level, and come out happy.

The most important advice on parenting and teaching we can offer is to constantly watch for periods of concentration and contemplation in our children and protect these moments from interruption.

The Inner Guide

Each of us was born with an inner guide, and all the tools to use whatever is found in the environment to create a self-fulfilled individual. Even if our own schooling may not have been based on a respect for this inner guide, we can provide it for our children.

We can create a marvelous environment, learn to observe and interpret our child's behavior to discover his or her needs, and get out of the way!

A Fresh Look

One of the most important attitudes to nurture is to see each child as a new being each day, forgetting the past and seeing only the potential for greatness.

This is also the best way to look at ourselves. It is a lot to ask of the adult to provide everything a child needs, and we believe that some time should be allotted, perhaps at the beginning of each day, to getting mentally prepared for the task by praying, meditating, taking a walk. Then one is better able to take a deep breath and face the day with a feeling of being new and in the present moment. If we can balance ourselves, our interactions with our children will be more enjoyable.

We are parents, grandparents, teachers, friends or advocates of children, because we care about others. No matter how much we try to be perfect we must learn not to waste time wishing we "had only known earlier," but must learn to laugh, to pick up the pieces, and to begin again.

We hope *Child of the World* is helpful in learning to enjoy the role of parent or teacher. We will keep sharing what we are continuing to learn about children, families, teaching, and life.

Age 0-6 - The Absorbent Mind

At this age children literally absorb, the world around them. We can never be too kind, polite, respectful, to be their role models. When they are being cared for by others we must have the highest standard of expectation for these vitally influential adults.

The 3-6 environment is called a *Casa dei Bambini*, or *House of Children* because it is very different from the traditional preschool. To imagine the difference think of how you act when welcoming friends into your own inviting, comfortable, enjoyable home.

Would you have everyone, all of your guests in your home, sit still on a line and put their hands in their lap and close their mouths? Or would you have specially prepared interesting activities, perhaps some food, and welcome each person with a personal greeting, inviting her to make herself at home? Would you line up chairs and tables, labeling where your guests were to sit? Or would you arrange the home with paintings, comfortable chairs, plants, and soft music?

If a guest in your home appeared at loose ends would you tell him to get to work, or would you have a private conversation with him and offer some interesting activity? When your guests were all settled in and having a lovely time would you interrupt them and tell them to come and sit in a circle because what you have to show them is more important than anything they might be

DETOXING CHILDHOOD

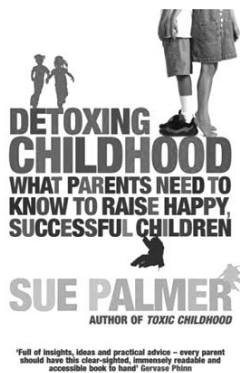
What Parents Need to Know to Raise Happy, Successful Children

Sue Palmer provides an essential guide to helping children steer clear of a toxic world.

Palmer presents practical, easy-to-follow advice on what kids need in terms of food, play, sleep, and talk; what kinds of childcare and education are most beneficial; how families can work together; and how to turn the potentially troublesome electronic village of TV, computers, and cell phones to our advantage. With so many pressures in our daily life, this is the one-stop solution to raising healthy, happy children today. A best-seller in England, finally available in the USA. 160 pages, softcover 9.5" x 6".

(*) GB030

\$14.95



MATH WORKS

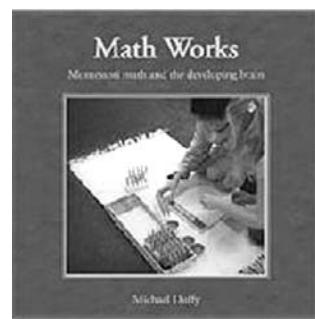
Montessori Math and the Developing Brain

Not only mathematics adepts and brain scientists are going to love this book, but teachers and parents of all kinds. Chapters include: Developing a Mathematical Mind; Concrete Materials to Learn Abstract Concepts; Montessori Math and the Human Brain; Montessori Math, Standards and Testing; A Plea to Parents.

There are many full color pictures of children working with math materials in Montessori classrooms, 272 pages, softcover 9.5" x 6".

(*) GB139

\$15.00



doing? What if a guest were tired or hungry, or deeply involved in something else?

From age 0-6 children are invited, but never required, to carry out certain tasks. There are only two rules in the 3-6 class.

(1) We (students and teacher) don't interrupt someone who is concentrating

(2) One can work with any material whose purpose one understands—having learned it from the teacher or from another child.

The adult observes carefully to meet the child's physical, mental, and emotional needs. Once a child has been attracted to an activity, and has begun to concentrate, the adult respects this choice and concentration and does not interrupt. Children are taught, through fun role-playing lessons rather than admonition, many of the social roles in class such as putting away work or not interrupting someone who is concentrating.

At this age we give the child, who is voraciously devouring experiences, the basic elements of all future studies—biology, art, geography, geometry, math, music, and language.

Age 6-12

This is a very stable and a more intellectual age. The 6-12 child is interested in the ways in which society functions, how it came into being. She wants to explore the past and the farthest reaches of the universe with the imagination, to see and understand

the universe and the development of humanity. This child can make incredible advances in intellectual work as he goes out into society and learns to function independently, in and outside school.

In recent years this age group has sometimes been divided into 6-9 (lower elementary) and 9-12 (upper elementary), but, after having taught in six different 6-12 environments, I really believe that this limits the child. When the age span is wider (I have taught 5-13 with wonderful results) children are exposed to an incredible range of work and have much more chance to sharpen their knowledge by teaching others. There are often far fewer teacher-led groups and longer periods of concentration.

I urge any teachers who have not tried the whole age span to do so, and I have heard from many teachers who try it that they will never go back because the work of the adult is easier and the overall experience more satisfying.

The only problem I had with a wide age span at this level is that I often had nothing to do! So I played the piano or concentrated on my own work alongside the children who are concentrating on theirs—both tasks inspiring the children to further accomplishment.

Age 12-18

The name for the Montessori "school" for age 12-15 is *Erdkinder*, or *earth children*. Aside from several "urban compromises" there is a real Montessori

Farm School in Ohio. For information go to the Michael Olaf website www.michaelolaf.net

The focus must continue to be on the needs and tendencies of the young person, NOT on the academic requirements of today. The world is changing far too rapidly for us to assume to know what children will need to know in even ten years. But we do know that he will need to know how to be happy, to be kind, to make intelligent choices, to solve problems, to help each other, and to enjoy doing a good job in all kinds of work.

A child who experiences independence—going to the grocery store on his own, finding books in a public library, interacting with people outside the school and family—by the end of the stable age of six to twelve—will have a better chance of experiencing a happy transition from adolescence to adult life: going to college, moving out into the adult world, and earning a living.

For Everything There is a Season

It is not good for children to be pushed into stages that they are not ready for. But neither is it good for us to hold children back when they are ready to move on. At any age, an unnecessary aid is really a hindrance to development. Dr. Montessori speaks for the child when she says, of the child's desire:

Please help me to do it myself!

3-HOUR WORK PERIOD & OBSERVATION OF 3-6 CLASS

(Lecture and Article Reprints)

The uninterrupted concentration of children as they work is the most important element of the Montessori experience. This is a reprint of a lecture on this crucial 3-hour work period, and how to "get there" in the Montessori 3-6 class. It was delivered by Susan Stephenson at the 1996 New Zealand Montessori Conference. Included are example concentration graphs taken from Dr. Montessori's writings, a blank graph to be copied and used by teachers, and specific suggestions for eliminating group lessons, fostering individual work. Included is a reprint of the article "Observation of a 3-6 Montessori Class," written in 1987 about the children's class at the Maria Montessori Training Center (MMI) in London, England, where the 3-hour work period is part of the daily schedule. 22 pages.

GB850

\$10.00

DVD: MONTESSORI, THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE GENIUS

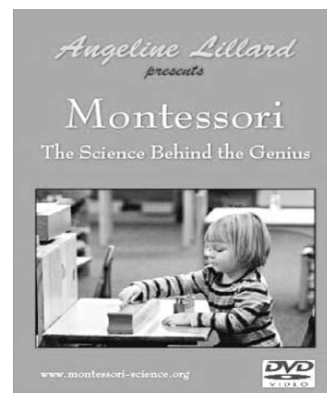
Dr. Angeline Lillard, professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, has been studying Montessori's methods for more than two decades.

This lively and engaging DVD lecture, based on her book, serves as an introduction to her discoveries of the science behind Montessori principles. It is used in education classes in universities as an introduction to Montessori, and for parent education evenings at Montessori school.

Most of all it is valuable for people who just do not have time to read the book *Montessori: the Science behind the Genius* but want to get the information! For teachers and parents alike. 104 min.

GB080

\$29.95



I had always understood that Madame Montessori dispensed with discipline and I wondered how she managed a room full of children . . . On sending my little boy of three to spend his mornings in a Montessori school, I found that he quickly became a more disciplined human being . . . The pedagogical discoveries involved have required genius but the teachers who are to apply them do not require genius. They require only the right sort of training, together with a degree of sympathy and patience, which is by no means unusual. The fundamental idea is simple: that the right discipline consists not in external compulsion, but in habits of mind, which lead spontaneously to desirable rather than undesirable activities. What is astonishing is the great success in finding technical methods of embodying this idea in education. For this, Madame Montessori deserves the highest praise.

— Bertrand Russell, *On Education*

Montessori Schools—the Teacher

The most important consideration in deciding to set up a Montessori class is the teacher. A non-Montessori-trained teacher can no more be expected to teach "Montessori" than a biologist could be expected to teach French. Using the Montessori approach to teach is extremely challenging, but equally exciting and rewarding.

Montessori schools have proven

successful all over the world, with all kinds of children (blind, gifted, learning disabled, wealthy, poor, etc.) and in many different environments (from refugee camps and slums to elegant schools in beautiful private homes).

Montessori Schools:

Some Elements

of Montessori Practice

Multi-aged Grouping, based on Periods of Development: Children are grouped in three or six-year spans and have the same teacher all of the years.

The 3-Hour Work Period: At every age, a minimum of one 3-hour work period per day, uninterrupted by required attendance at ANY group activities, is necessary when using the Montessori method of education to produce the results for which the method is famous.

When the children had completed an absorbing bit of work, they appeared rested and deeply pleased. It almost seemed as if a road had opened up within their souls that led to all their latent powers, revealing the better part of themselves. They exhibited a great affability to everyone, put themselves out to help others and seemed full of good will.

The Prepared Environment: The environment is logically arranged according to subject area. There are no text books, but instead approved didactic materials and a selection of culturally rich books and activities. Since

the child learns to glean information from many sources, instead of being handed it by the teacher, it is the role of the teacher to prepare and continue to adapt the environment, to link the child to it through well-thought-out lessons, facilitating the child's exploration and creativity.

Teaching Method: children are always free to move around the room, and to continue to work on a piece of material with no time limit. Seldom will two or more children be studying the same thing at the same time.

Children learn directly from the environment, and from other children—and from clear presentations of individual activities by the teacher.

The child is scientifically observed, observations recorded and then studied by the teacher. The teacher is adept at teaching one child at a time, with occasional small groups and almost no lessons given to the whole class. She is facile in the basic lessons of math, language, the arts and sciences, and in guiding a child's research and exploration, capitalizing on a child's interests of the moment and excitement about a subject.

Large groups occur only when starting a new class, or in the beginning of the school year, and are phased out as the children gain independence. Children learn from what they are studying individually, from group projects that

RECORD KEEPING IN THE MONTESSORI CLASS

In my training at the AMI Maria Montessori Training Organization in London, England in 1970 I was given a record system that has worked beautifully. Here is an overview of that method, along with suggestions on how exactly I gathered the data in the 3-6 classroom, and adapted it for the 6-12 classroom. There are also suggestions for using it in the Infant Community, and for keeping records in the elementary class. This record-keeping packet of information is constantly being updated and other important teaching information added because of requests from teachers.

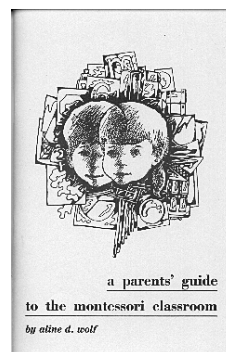
GB288 \$12.00

3-6 CULTURAL LESSONS,

It is the cultural experience—art, music, sciences, history, and geography—which provide the basis for the Montessori practical life, sensorial, language, and math work.

Here are the basic cultural lessons for the Montessori 3-6 class, inspired by the MMI Montessori training in London, England. Each lesson offers a key to one aspect of that area of study, and opens a door to a new understanding. NOTE: If the child does not get these lessons in the 3-6 class, they can be used to *initiate* these studies at the ages 6-12.

GB70	Physics Curriculum	\$5.00
GB71	Biology Curriculum	\$5.00
GB72	Geography/History Cur.	\$5.00
GB73	Music Curriculum	\$5.00
GB74	Art Curriculum	\$5.00
GB75	Complete Set	\$24.00



PARENTS' GUIDE TO THE MONTESSORI CLASSROOM

Illustrations and a brief introduction to the purpose and use of the *practical life, sensorial, cultural, math and language* materials in the Montessori 3-6 classroom. A classic for anyone curious about the materials used in this method of education from age 3-6. Softcover, black and white, 57 pages.

GB24 \$6.50

they initiate, and from the amazing variety of work that is going on around them during the day.

Class Size: The most successful 3-6 and 6-12 classes IF the teacher is fully trained in the method— are of 30-35 children to one teacher, with one non-teaching assistant, this number reached gradually over time. This provides the most variety of personalities, learning styles, and work being done at one time. This class size is possible because the children learn from each other and stay with the same teacher for three (3-6) to six (6-12) years. Although laws sometimes prohibit this ratio laws have been changed in a few states to allow it.

Areas of Study Linked: All subjects are interwoven; history, art, music, math, astronomy, biology, geology, physics, and chemistry are not isolated from each other and a child studies them in any order he chooses, moving through all in a unique way for each child. At any one time in a day all subjects—math, language, science, history, geography, art, music, etc.—are being studied, at all levels.

Assessment: There are no grades, or other forms of reward or punishment, subtle or overt. Assessment is by portfolio and the teacher's observation and record keeping. The real test of whether or not the system is working lies in the accomplishment and behavior of the children, their happiness, maturity,

kindness, love of learning, concentration, and work.

Requirements for age 3-6: There are no academic requirements for this age, but children are exposed to amazing amounts of knowledge and often learn to read, write and calculate beyond what is thought usual for a child of this age.

Requirements for ages 6-18: There are no curriculum requirements except those set by the state, or college entrance requirements, for specific grades and these take a minimum amount of time. Students of K-12+ age design 1-2 week contracts with the teacher to balance their work, and learn time management skills. The work of the 6-12 class includes subjects usually not introduced until high school.

Learning styles: All intelligences and styles of learning—musical, bodily kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, intuitive, natural, and the traditional linguistic and logical-mathematical—are nurtured and respected.

Social/Character education: Opportunities for the *valorization of the personality* is considered at least as important as academic education. Children are given the opportunity to take care of themselves, each other, and the environment—gardening, cooking, building, moving gracefully, speaking politely, doing social work in the community, etc.

The results: In looking at the results one must be sure they are judging a class run by a fully trained teacher. Using *Montessori* without this training will not have the same results. When the environment meets all of the needs of children they become, without any manipulation by the adult, physically healthy, mentally and psychologically fulfilled, extremely well-educated, and brimming over with joy and kindness toward each other.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF MARIA MONTESSORI

Maria Montessori was born in Italy in 1870. In her work at the University of Rome's psychiatric clinic, Dr. Montessori developed an interest in the treatment of children and for several years wrote and spoke on their behalf. At age twenty-eight, she became the director of a school for mentally disabled children. After two years under her guidance, these children, who formerly had been considered uneducable, took a school examination along with normal children and passed successfully.

Educators called Dr. Montessori a miracle worker. What was her response? If mentally disabled children could be brought to the level of normal children, what does that say about the education of our normal children?

For more information see picture and bio at www.michaelolaf.net

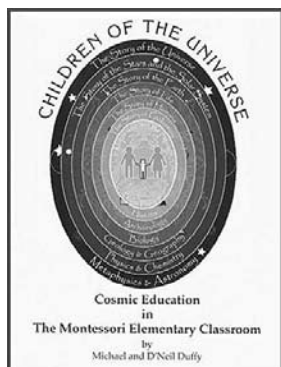
CHILDREN OF THE UNIVERSE COSMIC EDUCATION IN THE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

Cosmic Education, a concept that connects all subjects instead of isolating them, is the foundation of the Montessori 6-12 experience. This is a valuable exploration of the subject written by two experienced Montessori elementary teachers, parents, grandparents.

Chapters include: *Cosmic Education, The Story of the Universe, The Story of Life, The Story of Humans, The Story of Civilizations, Cosmic Education and the Future*. Introduction by Montessorian Aline D. Wolf, of the famous art books for children. Softcover, black and white illustrations, 6" x 9," 186 pages.

(*) GB160

\$30.00



CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT YET PEACEFUL

Charting the progress of 12 children in a real Texas Montessori 6-12 classroom, educator Donna Goertz shows how positive change can occur given the proper environment. In each case she describes a child's transformation from destructive troublemaker to responsible citizen of the classroom community.

Readers will learn how to apply Montessori methods to any early elementary environment. Here is an insightful quote from a parent who is also an MD: *I feel this is a must read for every educator and/or any parent of a "challenging" "special needs" child. Since my son's ADHD diagnosis I have read lots of books on ADHD and education. This is by far the BEST!* Softcover, 6" x 9," 240 pages.

GB380

\$15.95

