



MONTESSORI OF MACON

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD FOR A WHOLE WORLD

NEWSLETTER



Session #1 | September 2022





FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

# For Our Montessori Students Learning Takes Place Concretely

by Michele Scott

Welcome to the 22/23 school year and our first newsletter. If you are new to our Montessori of Macon community, this newsletter is published once a session. Each newsletter aims to share a snippet of information about each classroom. This might include a particular aspect of the classroom, current work, a recent project, a Montessori concept, and so much more! We hope you peruse this newsletter and gain insight into our school and the Montessori approach to learning.

By now, we are preaching to the choir since each of you has chosen MoM for your family. Thank you! During the enrollment process, you found characteristics of our school community and the Montessori philosophy that aligned with the educational experience you wanted for your family. However ... we hope each newsletter highlights a few new points to affirm your choice!

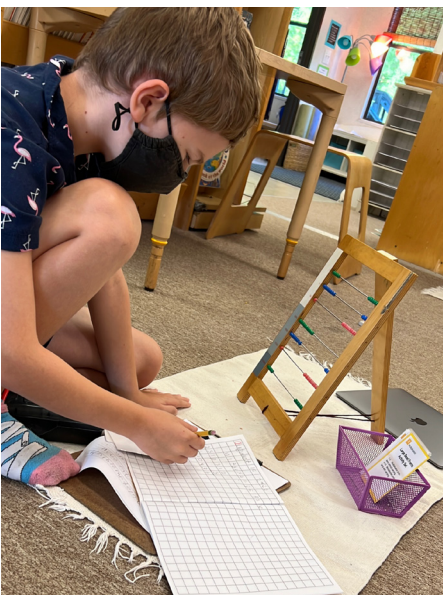
Just like you, I was once a parent at MoM. When my oldest daughter was in Primary, I was first introduced to the Montessori math materials. I remember being amazed by these materials and a touch jealous that I didn't learn math this way! For our young children, learning takes place concretely, and our math curriculum is no exception.

What do we mean by concrete? Montessori students use multi-sensory, three-dimensional materials to learn concepts. Students can hold the materials, feel the difference in weight between materials, turn it over, etc. These materials will bring your child to the point of abstraction, being able to do math in their head. Dr. Montessori's goal for students learning math





was not just to get the correct answer to the problem but to create a “mathematical mind.” She was more interested in the impact on the child’s mind rather than teaching only the technique to solve problems. Montessori called the materials she developed “a gym for mental gymnastics.” (Duffy, 2014) The benefits of using materials to discover, analyze and formulate the answer, as opposed to memorizing how to get the correct solution to a problem, provide so much more than the correct answer. While our Montessori students learn math, they also build critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills far more profoundly than simple memorization.



Maria Montessori would have been dismayed at our world’s current obsession with test scores. For her, the study of mathematics was not only designed to produce children who could get the right answers on the test. She wanted to make sure that children learned how to think with precision and logic, developing their “mathematical mind.” (Duffy, 2014)

Using these materials, children can discover and understand quantity, math operations, the decimal system, and all mathematical concepts in a way that traditional memorization can not provide.

As I look at current trends in education -21st Century Skills, STEM, Personalized Learning, Hands-on Learning, Peer Teaching, Dr. Montessori was way ahead of her time. Montessori’s curriculum and pedagogy already encompass so many of these “new” trends. The combination of the Montessori curriculum AND the Montessori materials provides a learning experience for your child like no other!

Duffy, M. (2014). *Math Works: Montessori math and the developing brain*. Parent Child Press.



## TODDLER 1

18 mos. - 3 years old  
Ms. Deidra & Ms. Carla



# Newfound Confidence

We can empower our children to become more independent

Our school year is already off to a beautiful start. The new students are feeling a little more comfortable each day. While our returning students were eager to get back into their regular routine. To say they were bursting with excitement is the only way to best describe their enthusiasm about school starting mid-July.

At the beginning of each school year, our focus is placed on our daily routine. This is very important to any Montessori environment. Our daily routine is very consistent from start to finish each day. Through this consistency, our toddlers learn to interpret and predict what's happening throughout the day. It allows them to feel comfortable and secure and empowers them to feel in control over time.

This newfound confidence will enable them to become independent with various skills. A simple yet consistent routine helps each child know what to expect beforehand. It gives them a sense of order in their day, which is very important to a toddler. As a parent, if you have ever experienced a toddler becoming upset because of a change in the way something would typically happen, then you understand this concept.

The children typically take about six weeks to adapt to our class routine. During this time, many lessons are given to help them become successful at navigating their environment.



They learn a variety of skills, such as:

- how to put away their belongings upon entering the classroom
- how to choose an activity off the shelf and sit down to engage with this activity
- how to return the work to the shelf when done with it
- how to handle things carefully and respectfully
- how to get a snack bowl and glass from our snack cabinet to serve themselves a snack
- how to pour water from a small pitcher into a glass
- how to clean up by placing trash in the trash, washing their dishes, and placing them in the drying rack
- how to come to the red line when the music plays from the small handheld music box
- how to take off their shoes and place them inside their shoe bin
- how to put on their outdoor boots before entering the playground and putting them away once we're done playing
- how to wash hands and retrieve their lunchbox for lunch
- how to prepare for a nap and rest quietly on a cot

This list goes on with each lesson carefully given and practiced a thousand times, or so it seems. Still, before you know it, things just click, and the classroom begins to flow and operate. It makes me proud to be a Montessori teacher!



# Toilet Learning Doesn't Need To Be Approached With Dread

**We find that toddlers are very motivated and proud of their accomplishments.**

One of the most notable works we tackle in the Montessori Toddler classroom is toilet learning. There is so much information about potty training your child, and it can be overwhelming. Parents usually find themselves overwhelmed as they sort through books, blogs, articles, and Facebook groups dedicated to transitioning your child from diapers to underwear. It certainly doesn't help that so much of the information they find conflicts.

In our classroom, toilet learning begins before the children are developmentally ready to wear underwear. Therefore, we always encourage the children to remove their clothes for their diaper change. Allowing the children to undress gives them a sense of accomplishment and ownership. It also gives them lots of practice with the mechanics of toilet learning, which is sometimes the most challenging part.

We start with standing diaper changes in a bathroom, where there is also access to a toilet. YouTube is a wonderful resource for illustrating this process. The child feels more independent standing on their own two feet and can assist more in the process. Every time we change a diaper, we offer to have the child sit on the potty. We encourage interest but do not force them to participate until they



are ready. When the child wants to sit on the potty, we do it several times a day. We support the child in their efforts, whether or not they are fruitful. Eventually, the child will pee in the potty, and in time, they will use it more than their diapers. When this occurs, we transition them to underwear.

Of course, there will be times when the child wets or soils their underwear. This is expected and is how they learn. When an accident does occur, the child participates in every part of the clean-up process, from wet clothing removal to redressing. In time, the child learns to listen to their body and goes to the bathroom when needed. We find that toddlers are very motivated to participate in this process and are very proud of their accomplishments, as they should be.

The most crucial step is ensuring they display developmental signs of toilet learning readiness. Some indications of readiness are dressing and

putting on their own socks and shoes. They may inform you when they have a soiled diaper and want to watch you or others use the toilet. Their interest in general bathroom activities will increase, and you may notice their diaper stays dry for several hours. Have they transitioned from using a bottle to a cup, and are they eating in a regular chair? They may start sleeping out of the crib and can get on and off the potty without assistance. These are some of the signs we watch for when deciding whether or not to transition to underwear.

For more tips about toilet learning at home, email Ms. Moira at [mglennon@montessoriofmacon.org](mailto:mglennon@montessoriofmacon.org).

## Signs They're Ready to Try the Potty...



Are they putting on their own socks and shoes?



Do they inform you when they have a soiled diaper and want to watch you or others use the toilet?



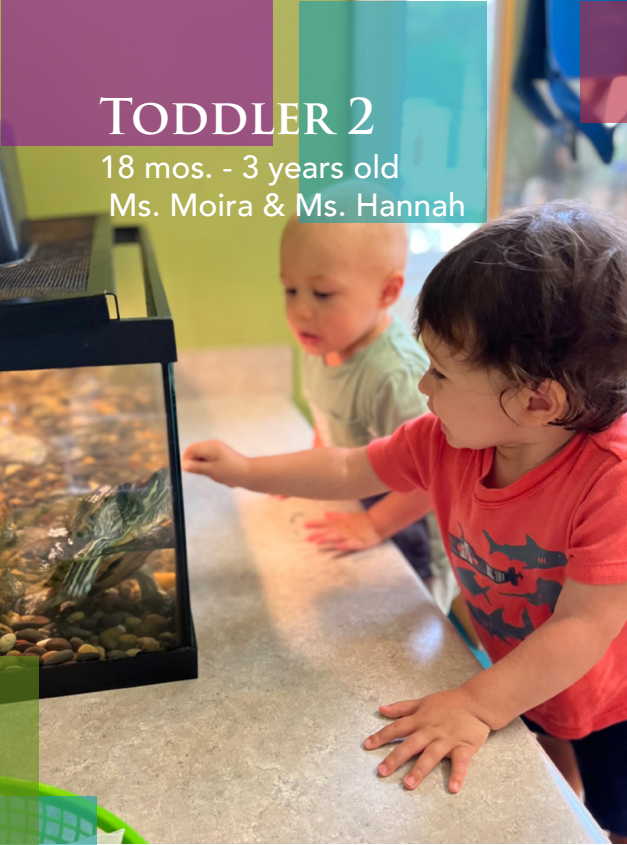
Have they transitioned from using a bottle to a cup, and are they eating in a regular chair?



They may start sleeping out of the crib and can get on and off the potty without assistance.

## TODDLER 2

18 mos. - 3 years old  
Ms. Moira & Ms. Hannah



# THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR HAS BEGUN

*And Our Classroom is Brimming With Potential!*

The new school year has begun, and our classroom is brimming with potential. Beginnings require patience and understanding while the children adjust to their new environment and new friends. There will most likely be tears, big feelings we may not know how to handle, and a lot of uncertainty. But, we offer lots of reassurance and snuggles, and the magic begins once everyone has settled in.

I am frequently asked why I work with toddlers. Many sympathies often follow this question because toddlers are viewed as difficult and demanding. I disagree. I love toddlers because they teach us how to live in the present moment.

They are not worried about what errand they must run on the way home from school. They simply exist in and enjoy the moment in which they find themselves.

Toddlers are like sponges in learning, absorbing everything they observe. Maria Montessori referred to this as the “absorbent mind.” Consider the acquisition of language. We do not teach babies sentence structure and grammar. Yet, they usually speak in sentences and sometimes paragraphs by the time they are three years old. All of this language development is acquired through absorbing information.



Toddlers are competent and capable. They love to help us do chores and are wildly passionate about self-care. Let them do it all by themselves, and they will prove to you they can.

Toddlers are impulsive, following every urge that arises, but they are not acting out of spite or retaliation; they are innocent and following their instincts. Toddlers are amazingly forgiving, and they don't hold grudges. Toddlers are genuine. They know who they are and are true to themselves. We could all learn from their honesty and self-assuredness.

The love we receive from these toddlers is overwhelming and humbling. Our classroom is filled with wonder and delight, and we are thankful for it.



## PRIMARY 1

3 - 6 years old

Ms. Paula & Ms. Whitney



# GRACE, COURTESY & CONSISTENCY

As you probably imagine, the first school session is one of our busiest. New students are adjusting and learning the routines and basic functioning of the environment. In contrast, returning students are eager to engage in new lessons and help their new friends transition into the classroom.

We usually spend a considerable amount of time practicing grace and courtesy lessons. These lessons are the foundation of the classroom community as they set the groundwork for a consistent environment. Dr. Montessori said, "A child who becomes a master of his acts through repeated exercises of grace and courtesy, and who has been encouraged by the pleasant and interesting activities in which he has been

engaged, is a child filled with health and joy and remarkable for his calmness and discipline.” Providing grace and courtesy lessons and a consistent routine allows us to move throughout the school year in an organic progression. Our day begins with a short group time. We take advantage of the cooler weather and enjoy outside time first, then we have our larger group session. After our group meeting, the children are dismissed for their individual work and lessons.

Every one of the Montessori “works” or materials the child is introduced to is hands-on and multi-sensory. Our children learn by being exposed to their environment, observing, and using their five senses when repeating a lesson.

Montessori materials are designed so that the child receives instant feedback about her progress as she works. This allows her to recognize, correct, and learn from an error without adult assistance. Control of error extends to more academic work. For example, a child will revise their spelling or answers to a math problem because the solutions are right in front of them. There is no better way to build self-esteem and trust than to allow someone to learn from their mistakes in a non-judgmental, free of grades environment.

The outside environment is an extension of our classroom. We have been busy gardening every week, and the children have done a fantastic job resetting their individual garden parcels. Who knew weeding could be such an exciting job for a three-year-old! Or, as one of my students said, “Ms. Paula, I am more of a “weeder than a planter.”

I am amazed at each child’s progress as they transition into a longer, uninterrupted work cycle. I look forward to an exciting school year!



# Our Children Posses An Intrinsic Love Of Discovery.

Maria Montessori teaches us that children have a spontaneous desire to learn. Curiosity is a distinct characteristic of children of all ages. Therefore, fostering one's natural desire to know more is essential. In the Montessori classroom, we encourage exploration and, in turn, can observe this intrinsic love of discovery that children are born with.

Montessori wrote in *The Secret of Childhood*, "A child's different inner sensibilities enable him to choose from his complex environment what is suitable and necessary for growth. They make the child sensitive to some things but leave him indifferent to others. When a particular sensitiveness is aroused in a child, it is like a light that shines on some objects but not others, making of them his whole world. It is not simply a question of having an intense desire for certain situations or certain things."

"Within the child, there is a unique potentiality for using these objects for his own growth[...]." This concept that children are drawn to specific things that offer the most significant personal growth is wondrous to think about. Through my observations of the students thus far, I have seen personal interests develop before my eyes. We have future artists, scientists, storytellers, architects, and teachers that arrive ready to work and show off their newfound skills each day. Well, I can't leave out the students who



show more interest in human affection over exploration, which also fulfills a crucial role for the child.

In this session, we learned where we live, starting with the city we live in, the state, the country, the continent, and even the planet we live on. We briefly talked about Macon's various festivals and characteristics that make it a unique place to live. We learned about the state flower, tree, bird, and fruit.

We have been learning about the various homes that people live in and animal homes around the world. We had fun using a compass and learning the cardinal directions that help us navigate the world around us. We looked at a map of the United States and even made a map of our classroom.

We have attempted to tackle our overgrown garden and have had many teachable moments about invasive insects (ants) along the way. We've had the chance to sing and dance joyfully during Music class, while yoga class has grounded us and helped us learn the importance of breathing. Weekly mindfulness practices have taught us essential techniques to find peace and calm. We are off to a fantastic start, and I can't wait to see where this year takes us.



## LOWER ELEMENTARY

1st through 3rd Grades  
Ms. Gyni & Ms. Katherine



# All You Need Is A Good Map

G'day, G'day! During Session #1, we're studying Australia and Oceania. We have already learned much about the land and people there!

Studying continents provides learning opportunities in all academic and cultural areas. These studies usually start with the continent's natural elements and continue as we look more closely at the area's political boundaries, flags, and resources. Finally, we learn about the peoples, cultures, and countries that make up the continents we are studying, along with their art, music, and food.

We begin continent studies with various maps. For example, biome maps show first-year students where deserts, grasslands, and forests are located within the continent. Political maps teach children the countries and territories of

the area. In contrast, pin maps help children learn capitals and significant land and water forms.





Children love looking at and recreating maps. It's also good practice in writing and coloring. Next, we reinforce political map studies with flag work. Biome map work is followed by a deeper dive into each biome and the plants, animals, and people that live there. Children also enjoy researching countries and presenting their findings to the class.

We read literature from or about the continent we're studying, which helps us learn more about the history and culture of the area. In this session, for instance, we enjoyed reading folktales from Australia and some Magic Treehouse books set in the area. Our art teachers also help us incorporate our continent studies into their lessons!

In the coming days, we will explore Aboriginal art and listen to music from the region. We loved singing to Slim Dusty's "G'Day G'Day" this session.

We all love to eat, and food is an essential part of any particular culture, so we're always looking for opportunities to try foods from our study areas. We have plans to try foods from Australia and Oceania soon. An old favorite is Australian "fairy bread." We look forward to sharing this with our new students! We also tried alaisa fa'apopo (Samoan coconut rice).

Continent studies are an excellent way for children to learn about other places in the world through their language, art, literature, science, and geography lessons. Learning about different cultures helps our children see the beauty of the human race and all its unique members. Looking at the plants and animals worldwide helps build a wonder and love of nature that matures into environmentally conscious adulthood. Learning countries and flags help children gain a sense of

place in the world and builds a foundation for future world history and current events lessons. At the end of their three-year cycle in Lower Elementary, children will better understand the whole world through their continent studies. This will repeat in Upper Elementary, where they will dive deeper into each continent's offerings.



## UPPER ELEMENTARY

4th through 6th Grades

Ms. Kerry & Ms. Jenny

# When the Elders Aren't Actually That Old...

A former Upper Elementary (UE) teacher, Tethel Brown, coined the phrase "elder." She would call the 6th-year students this to show their experience and duty as role models. She even called the 5th-year students a respectable "junior elder," as a year in UE had afforded them some expertise in the classroom. Today, we still use the phrase to emphasize how the older students in our classroom help the younger ones.

A hallmark of a Montessori classroom is having 3 grades together in one classroom. There are a few great reasons for this practice. First, it allows a child to become an expert in their classroom. Over three years, they learn the class routines and have plenty of time to thrive in a familiar space without the stress of transitioning. We aim for the classroom to feel like a second home, and who wants to move house each year?

Additionally, it allows for experience in leadership, as returning students help new ones learn how the classroom runs. Finally, it allows for repetition with a variation. Since some topics need to be reviewed each year for new students, many benefit from hearing about them for multiple years. We aim to vary these lessons to help keep them interesting for the returning students.

With their experience, older students are great at helping younger students with work. Sometimes, those elders are better at it than the teachers. For example, I can assure you the nuances of PowerPoint slide transitions are not lost on a 6th grader! Additionally, we know explaining a process



or topic to another helps to solidify understanding for the one presenting. Thus, a review of an old process helps both students. This relationship can make students confident in teaching new skills and planning lessons independently. Recently, a few students taught others how to knit and crochet without teacher instruction.

Often students will observe a lesson. Here they may watch quietly as others hear a lesson. Younger students usually love to listen to what the other grades are learning about and can't wait their turn to learn these exciting things. Through observing others, students often see a new math or language work on which they can ask for a lesson. We often see the opposite relationship too. Older kids are often eager to see their old favorite work when old lessons are brought out for the younger years. A spacewalk around campus is something the 5th-years can share with the other grades. Older students will also be asked to help the teacher share a familiar lesson, such as the Great Lessons. During the first week of school, the 6th-years worked on a skit to share about the various early human groups. This reinforced their knowledge of the subject while giving them a unique opportunity to teach the younger kids.

Some responsibilities in the classroom are only for the 6th-year students. For example, the older students are responsible for taking turns leading weekly class meetings. Based on the MMUN (Montessori Model UN) format, one student leads the meeting, another takes notes, and a third helps with the pizza-money business. Here they gain experience leading a group in a discussion on issues related to our classroom. They model collaborating and compromising to find solutions that work for the entire classroom. The 4th and 5th years have time to observe how the meeting works before it's their turn to lead.

In so many ways, the "elders" of the class help and lead the others through their 3 years in UE.



# MIDDLE SCHOOL

7th & 8th Grade  
Mr. Shelby & Ms. Susan



## Learning to Market our Middle School Market

The Middle School Market (MSM) is a unique opportunity for our adolescents to deliver delicious, homemade treats to our students, families, and teachers. Running a successful business like the Middle School Market rewards our students through earning to prep and cook delicious food, managing a business budget, and marketing and growing a successful business. This year our students are learning more about how proper marketing can make the MSM even more successful.

During this first session, our middle schoolers started a Marketing elective with our Communications/Admin. Specialist, Sherry Singleton. Sherry brings with her 20 years of experience in graphic design and marketing and is dedicated to sharing that knowledge with our students. In addition, she aims to help them expand MSM and teach them some valuable marketing skills along the way.

PROCEEDS SUPPORT OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM!

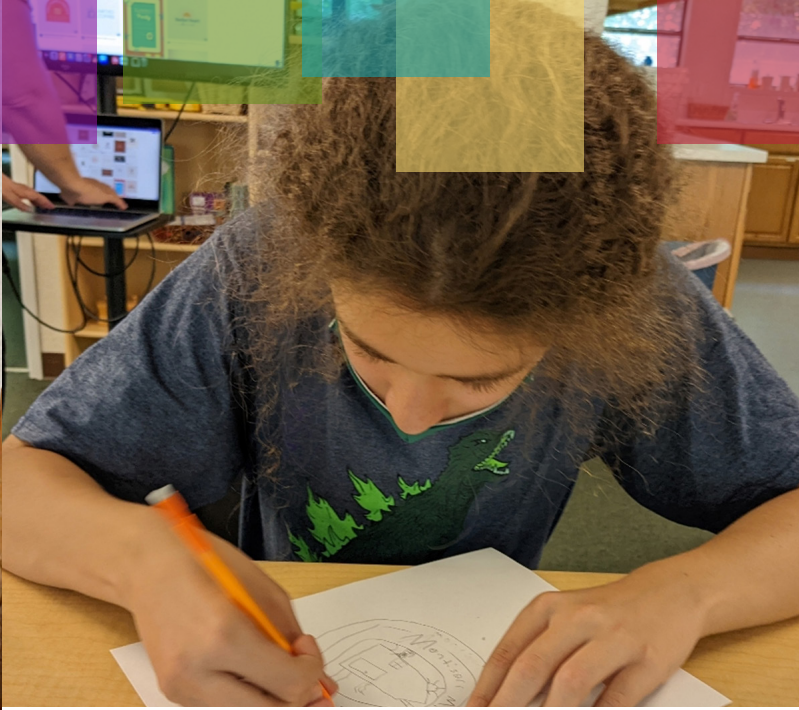
**This Friday - 8/26 - 3 to 3:30**

- Muddy Buddies	\$1.50
- Mini Cheesecakes	\$1.00
- Banana Pudding	\$1.50
- Granola bites	\$ .50
- Lemonade	\$1.00

**MOM Middle School MARKET**  
HOMEMADE TREATS

MADE WITH LOVE AND CARE BY THE MIDDLE SCHOOL  
CASH OR CHECKS ACCEPTED

The class began by learning about what a business brand is. Next, they learned why brand colors and



typefaces are essential and were given access to the MoM brand specs. This knowledge has helped the students design their new flyers and signage with the same continuity of marketing promotions used by the school. This cohesiveness will add a layer of professionalism and recognition to our MSM brand.



After a discussion about color, typeface, and what visual style the students wanted the business to have, they began working on a new logo design that would represent MSM for future years. Our students combed through various logo designs on Canva for inspiration in creating their own unique designs. While working through this process, we learned about the elements of design that make a logo stand out.

Once their logo was set, the students began working on a new flyer for Middle School Market. Next, they scheduled a photo shoot to capture attractive images of our products and learned how to set up a lightbox for the best photos of their food products.



Now our students are working on promotional signs to place around the campus to alert our families that a Market is happening. The students decided on a bright and bold design inspired by a caution sign with a witty phrase to entertain our customers.

This process has set parameters to consider to make a design good and allows creativity to flourish within those boundaries. This has been an exciting process that imparts efficient and valuable skills to our students who will soon be entering the workplace, either for an employer or their own business.

## Montessori of Macon's Mission

"To Educate the Whole Child for a Whole World."

By the whole child, we mean the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual aspects of being human. By nurturing the wholeness of our children and fostering respect for each other, nature and community we prepare them for a life of continued joy that will contribute positively to a whole world.



**MONTESSORI OF MACON**  
EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD FOR A WHOLE WORLD



**AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY\***  
education that transforms lives  
Member School

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EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD FOR A WHOLE WORLD