

# Montessori Center of Downriver - March Newsletter

## The Leadership Year: Why Staying for Kindergarten Is So Important

Do you remember your last year of elementary or middle school? You were finally the oldest at the school! You were, at last, the coveted "big kid" you'd been admiring for years. This is how children feel about their final year of the three-year cycle at a Montessori school.

During their first two years, children in a Montessori class work with the older kids in their class, seeing them as leaders and turning to them for help and looking to them as an example. They also look forward to the day that they get to step into that role. This final year is called the leadership year, or sometimes the capstone year or, more simply, kindergarten, and it is incredibly important. Let's talk about why!

### Reasons to Stay for Kindergarten

#### The Familiar is Family

Unlike at a traditional school, in Montessori schools, children stay with the same teachers through years-long cycles. At the preschool level, children will have the same teacher from ages 3 through 6. If you stay for kindergarten, your child will have a teacher who knows them well and with whom they have a close and comfortable relationship. They will also have many close friends and peers in their class. Children are comfortable in a familiar environment and are able to "hit the ground running"; switching to a new school for kindergarten will require an adjustment period before children can get down to work, whereas staying in the Montessori environment allows children to build on what they've spent the past two years on, leading to both mastery and rapid growth.

#### Leadership Skills for Life

It's not called the leadership year for nothing! Being the oldest in a multi-age class means children get more classroom responsibilities and privileges. They also chance to develop their leadership skills, and being able to help and care for younger children develops confidence and empathy. Not only that, but helping younger children with their work reinforces the older child's knowledge of a subject. Giving children the chance to be the oldest in a multi-age room can also increase their self-esteem--who doesn't like being looked up to and admired?

#### Formative Assessments, Not Standardized Testing

Children in a traditional kindergarten will almost certainly undergo standardized testing, which can be extremely stressful for them. It's also not a great measure of real knowledge, nor does it help children in their learning. In a Montessori school, children receive formative assessments. These are done continuously and naturally as a child receives lessons. Teachers will assess knowledge during learning, and lessons can be changed while happening to match the level the child is at. This is much

more low pressure for children, but also much more useful. This is the type of individual attention that is often missing in a traditional school.

## **The Real Reason We Want Your Child to Stay**

We have to be honest. We want your child to stay because...we love them! Watching children develop and grow through their three-year cycle is incredible, and it's seeing that growth that drives Montessori teachers to do what they do. If you have more questions about the leadership year, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## **In the Classroom**

### **Ms Ashley's Room**

The theme in Ms Ashley's room is oceans. They will be learning about ocean animals and will have some super neat water activities! March is also reading month. They will celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday, and each day, a new friend will get to pick the story they want read to the class that day.

### **Mrs. Dona's Room**

In February, Mrs. Dona's room studied Africa, including the cultures and animals found on the continent. They worked on creating a Savannah sunset and tasted chickpeas and black-eyed peas, as well as fried plantains. The class also read African tales, including Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe.

Next month, they will be studying Europe!

### **Ms Paula's Room**

In March, Ms Paula's room will be working on all things spring! They'll continue their work on birds, including putting out more feeders, and they're going to start planting seeds in preparation for spring gardening.

They've also finished their work on the artic and will be studying North America. They will begin cooking in the class as they study new cultures!

### **Mrs. Melissa's Room**

The monthly theme for March in Mrs. Melissa's room is jungle animals. They will learn fun facts about animals, including their habitats and which continent they live on. They will continue learning more about how primary colors mix together to make secondary colors and will end by making their own "White Rabbit's color book".

They will also start doing a mystery number. Every other day, the number and quantity will change. The children will then try to remember what the number was and count out objects in the basket. The numbers will be 0-10 not in order.

## Announcements and Dates

1. Fall registration will open to our in-house families (including any new families who signed up for summer sessions) in April.

We will send you a link with information at that time. We expect that spots will fill quickly.

2. Summer session registration has been opened to our waitlist and spots are filling quickly--we've already closed the half-day program for June and July. If you have not yet registered for any session, please visit [myprocare.com](http://myprocare.com) and register for all the sessions you require and make your first payment. You only need to pay for the first registered session.

3. If you have already registered for June but not yet July or August, please fill out this form as soon as possible to secure your spot. Please do not use the form if you haven't registered for a session.

**March 22nd:** Fire Drill

**March 24th:** Tornado Drill

**March 28th - April 1st:** Spring Break (school closed)

## Local Events and Resources

1. Gleaners is doing a drive-thru food distribution in Wyandotte on 03/04/2022 and 03/18/2022 from 9:00am to 11:00am at the Yack Arena. Families can receive a box of fresh produce and shelf-stable goods. No registration necessary.

2. It's Maple Fest 2022 at MSU Tollgate Farm Children's Garden! On March 5th and 6h, enjoy a wagon ride, tap a tree, and taste some maple-licious treats. [Tickets are required.](#)

3. Lowe's offers free kids' DIY kits that you can take home and build together. March's kit is a table top game! [Register now](#) for pick up on March 18th.

4. The Southgate Library has craft kits available for pick up.



Early childhood summed up! Thanks for sharing, Ms Kimmie!

## Fun at Home

Looking for a fun project that combines art and science? [Try fizzy painting!](#) If you want to make it a St. Patrick's Day activity, cut out some shamrocks and use green paint.

## For the Love of Reading

### For Parents

1. [Why Montessori Education Is Priceless](#)
  2. We have a new blog! [Check it out here.](#)
- We'll be adding new articles regularly. Let us know if you have any topics you'd like to cover.

### Children's Books

1. In Like a Lion Out Like a Lamb by Marion Dane Bauer
2. Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert