



LDVA NEWS
December 2016

Signs of a "Normalized" Child - Summary

Article from "Tomorrow's Child" Magazine (Nov. 2016)
by award winning Montessori teacher Maren Schmidt, M.Ed.

Children who are on-track with their development display all or most of the following traits: love of order; love of work; deep spontaneous concentration; attachment to reality; love of silence and working alone; sublimation of the possessive instinct; power to act from real choice not just impulsivity; trust and obedience; independence and initiative; as well as spontaneous self-discipline. In Montessori terms, we call this process of natural and normal development, *normalization*.

Love of Order: Brain research is showing that, during the first six years of life, the neural matter of the brain is growing at a tremendous rate. As certain sensory pathways are trod in the brain, future access is being almost guaranteed by the children's repetition of experiences, driven by love of order. Classification of objects and experiences in the child's environment are also forming. Making connections of similar qualities among objects is an important skill. It is the child's innate sense for finding and creating order that helps build later logical order. Not having enough time to explore prevents our children from tapping into their inborn sense of order that promotes positive brain development...being distracted from exploration through television or computer usage are some of the ways we disrupt our children's sense of order.

Love of Work: The young child's love of work, or being involved in meaningful activity is an inborn trait. Growing and moving in a confined environment aids development and learning. Freedom to move, within the limits of safety, is essential to positive growth.

Deep Concentration: Children naturally come to an intense, self-generated ability to focus attention. It is how we are wired as human beings to learn. The modern world offers many distractions that didn't exist 50 years ago. Today, the amount of technological change we see in a year is more than many people saw in a life-time. Children's developing brains are seeking opportunities to create deep concentration by choosing engaging activities that are interesting to them, that they have time to explore and complete, and the opportunity to repeat. When these opportunities are not available to a child, due to distractions, environmental or time constraints, frustration builds which can lead to anger or apathy. A consistent environment with clear expectations, minimal distractions and structure helps develop deep concentration - a sign of healthy and normal development.

Attachment to Reality: This is one of several outward signs that healthy learning is occurring. Fantasy is often a call for more vocabulary and enriching experiences. To help the child reattach to reality we need to feed the child's mind with real objects and experiences. Around the age of 4.5 children experience a growth in vocabulary and, when given the opportunities, can learn upwards of 250 new words a week. When the need for intensive language is not met, children may begin to create fantasy worlds and imaginary friends to help keep the mind engaged.

continued on page 4



LDVA CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The 2016 LDVA Christmas Concert will be held in the gym on Thursday, December 22 at 4:30 pm. Students from Preschool to Grade 8 will come together to delight parents and family members with performances in the spirit of Christmas. The evening will include a LAPA sponsored raffle. It is the perfect way to celebrate the upcoming Christmas Holidays.



Above: Mrs. Lee reading to the Junior Casa class



Right: Casa Montessori students working with puzzle maps

LEONARDO'S CHALLENGE

Mr. T. Jewell



On November 24th students were challenged to design and build a mini-parachute that would allow a small mass to have a soft landing after being launched from the stage in the gym. Elementary students were divided into nine groups, and each group received a plastic bag containing various materials which could be useful for constructing a parachute. Students needed to choose between using newspaper sheets or plastic bags, and also received string, tape, and rubber stoppers to be used as ballast. Students also debated which shape of parachute to create, with most opting for a circular design. The idea was to attach up to three rubber stoppers with special attention paid to the number of pieces of string used, as well as to attaching the strings securely in order to resist the drag force created by the parachute as it broke the fall of the stoppers. There were a number of creative designs of varying complexity, with some groups cutting out their parachutes while others used the whole bag in an attempt to trap as much air as possible during flight. In the end, the students created some promising parachutes and learned about important scientific forces such as gravity and air resistance; most found the toughest part of the challenge was to launch their creations high enough without hitting the gym ceiling. Many groups discovered that folding their parachutes carefully was essential for launching them without the chute getting entangled in its own strings; when this happened the parachute would open too late to fully break the fall of the attached rubber stoppers. Students realized that more success could be achieved if they were able to drop their parachutes from a higher location, giving the parachutes more time to open before hitting the floor. Students incorporated many of the Da Vincian principles in creating solutions to the challenge; most notably, they identified *sfumato*, *corporalità*, and *dimostrazione* as key components of the experience.

**HARBOURFRONT CENTRE WORKSHOPS**

On December 6th Elementary students visited Harbourfront Centre. Our Lower Elementary students made *Rod Puppets* and were involved in a "Random Acts of Paint" art workshop. Students were encouraged to free their inhibitions and experiment with the idea of chance and accident in their creative process. Students in Grades 4-8 learned about the history and tradition of masks. They experimented with paper sculpture techniques and three dimensional forms and then created a colourful mask of their own (pictures above).

SCIENCE TEACHER & LDVA PARENT DIANA REIS SHARES HER LOVE FOR SCIENCE AT LDVA

Left: Ms. Reis engages Senior Casa children in "Science fun"

Right: Ms. Reis visits the Lower Elementary Class where she conducted exciting Science experiments with the students



SCUOLA MATERNA NEWS Signora M. Ricciuti

Dopo aver completato la programmazione per il mese di novembre, i bambini della Scuola Materna si accingono alla preparazione del periodo natalizio, completando tutte le attività che questo mese comporta, incluso il Concerto di Natale. In occasione di questo evento i bambini creano un'atmosfera natalizia attraverso l'apprendimento di canzoncine e poesie tradizionali, questo arricchisce sia la lingua che la cultura italiana.

Il 21 dicembre è una giornata speciale - "PigiamaDay". I bambini verranno a scuola con un comodo pigiama, che li terrà caldi nel mangiare "Pancakes" la mattina e Pizza a pranzo, entrando ancora di più l'atmosfera natalizia.

Una data importante, il Concerto di Natale giovedì il 22 di dicembre alle ore 16:30. Venerdì il 23 di dicembre gli insegnanti avranno un aggiornamento professionale e quindi non ci sarà scuola. Le lezioni riprenderanno lunedì il 9 di gennaio 2017. Buone vacanze di Natale!

Un ringraziamento speciale alla signora Siracusa ed al signor Arora per essere venuti in classe a svolgere dei lavoretti natalizi con i bambini.

**CASA MONTESSORI NEWS** Ms. Ritacca

The holiday season is here and the children in Casa have been busy preparing for the Christmas Concert and creating beautiful Christmas crafts. As we finish our holiday shopping, it is important to be considerate when choosing gifts for children. There are many fun toys available that also aid in the child's physical and mental development by engaging the child mentally or that involve hand/muscle movement. Children under six years old should have limited access to technology. Spending too much time in front of a screen turns children into passive learners who become accustomed to having information handed to them instead of thinking for themselves. Some age appropriate gift ideas include: wooden blocks, puzzles, child-sized brooms/mops, pencil crayons and sketchbooks, bicycles, and percussion instruments. Your child's teacher will be happy to provide you with further suggestions.

We remind parents to please remember to label all items sent to school with your child's name. To minimize distractions, please ensure that the change of clothes in your child's cubby is either the school uniform or navy pants with a white polo.



Above: Senior Casa students working alone engaged in deep concentration and demonstrating self-discipline.

Below: LEM students having fun being creative at the Harbourfront art workshop



SNOW DAY POLICY NOTICE

In the event that classes need to be cancelled due to a snow storm warning, when possible, the following procedure will be followed: the day before the storm warning parents will be informed that an email will be sent out by 6:30 am on the day of the closure. If in doubt parents are invited to call the school or send an email to Mrs. Lee at sl@ldva.on.ca before heading out to school.

COLD WEATHER GUIDELINES

We would like to inform parents about conditions which would cancel or shorten recess. If a wind chill of -25C to -27C is reported recess will be shortened. If the wind chill exceeds -27C children will stay indoors. Please insure your children have warm winter clothing at all times.



Junior Casa students with their snowman

The staff at LDVA wishes all our families a joyful and safe Christmas Holiday. We look forward to seeing everyone back in school in the New Year on January 9, 2017

Signs of a "Normalized" Child - cont. from page 1

Love of Silence & Working Alone: Up until the time they lose their first tooth, the natural and normal development of children is characterized by a love of silence and working alone. The desire to be out in the community and working with others are characteristics of the elementary-aged child. The preschool child is in a period of development of refining senses, along with language, movement, social relations, and understanding order. These are hampered by noisy distractions or being told what to do. Working alone allows the child to think and analyze the activity in ways that suits his or her specific learning need.

The Transformation of the Possessive Instinct: The transformation of the possessive instinct occurs when the child is given an environment to use materials freely while respecting the right of others to do the same. For a child under 7 whose development is on-track, the materials in the environment are seen as community property. When needs are being met in the young child we rarely hear the word "mine" from the child.

The Power to Act from Real Choices: Choosing out of curiosity helps create knowledge and experience which forms the basis for informed and real choice later. We should offer our children experiences that can create knowledge that will allow them the power to act from real choice. This will help our children to truly choose what they like and like what they choose, in all aspects of their life.

Listening & Following the Adults: When the relationship is built on trust, children with on-track development listen to adults and follow their respectful requests. An obedient child listens for directions from a trusted adult and then chooses to follow with confidence based on previous positive experiences. If a child ignores direction we must figure out what has caused him or her to veer off the path of normal development. Parents and teachers hold the power to create a trusting relationship, or one of rebellion. Children are born to connect positively to adults. To create authentic relationships with our children, we must have integrity in our words and actions. True obedience is based on mutual respect and the confidence in our leadership.

Independence: The role of parents and teachers is to guide children to complete independence. A three- year-old is able to do a multitude of tasks independently when given the tools and an environment to do so - dress themselves, get themselves a drink, fix a simple snack, wash hands and face, and much more. Helping children attain independence has two aspects: 1. providing tools and an environment that promotes independence and 2. avoid coddling them (doing for them what they can do for themselves).

Spontaneous Self-Discipline: A key indicator of healthy and normal development in children is the presence of self-discipline. As a child's will is strengthened by the use of free choice; spontaneous self-discipline appears. This sets the stage for concentration, coordination, love of order and independence to develop naturally.