



July 2008

Southern African Montessori Association

Inside This Issue

Message from the President

Looking at Bullying

The Process of Normalisation

Children need Boundaries

Best Practices work

Members Page

Regional News

Marketing

Training

SAMA Products

SAMA Contacts

Message from the President

Dear SAMA Members

Welcome to yet another fantastic newsletter. Our newsletter has grown into such an incredible resource for members over the past two years and we really have Jacky Price to thank for this. She has been steadfast in working on improving our newsletter every month and we are deeply grateful for her contribution to SAMA.

Regrettably, due to Jacky's study and other commitments, she has resigned from the SAMA Exco and we wish her the very best for both her own growth and that of her school. It has been an honour to work with someone of Jacky's calibre on Exco and we will miss her presence.

From next month, Deirdre, our very capable and creative administrator, will take over the compilation of the National newsletter and she would welcome your contributions. You can email these to admin@samontessori.org.za Within each edition of the newsletter you will find the topic/theme for the next one – please submit your contributions by the 20th of each month.

On a happier note, I have no doubt all of us have enjoyed celebrating “Madiba Month” in our schools. I am sure you have also experienced such amazing warmth and admiration towards Nelson Mandela – even from the smallest of our children. What an inspiration! If you have any interesting or touching stories to share with us, please send them through.

In the words of Nelson Mandela,

“It is not beyond our power to create a world in which all children have access to a good education. Those who do not believe this have small imaginations. Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world... To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. If there are dreams about a beautiful South Africa, there are also roads that lead to their goal. Two of these roads could be named Goodness and Forgiveness.”

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

Warm Regards

Sam Streak

SAMA President

SAMA OFFICE:

Fax no: (041) 5812874

Address: P.O. Box 5505

Walmer, Port Elizabeth 6065

Please note that the SAMA

Cell number and e-mail address

remains the same: **072 6095979**

admin@samontessori.org.za

Website:

www.samontessori.org.za

Looking at Bullying in Montessori Schools – Submitted by Sam Streak

(Excerpt from an article published on the Montessori Association of New Zealand's website www.montessori.org.nz)

“The archetypal bully is an over-weight and overbearing boy, but girls too can be aggressors. Rather than physical threats or attack they tend, however, to use more verbal and social or relational types of aggression to intimidate their victims. (Crick and Rose, 2000).

Less research has been undertaken on this type of aggression but it may be just as hurtful in its effect. It is noted that bullies are four times as likely to become criminals as non-bullies; on the other hand the effect on their victims is likely to be long-term (Morris et al. 2000). We should also remember that bullying is often a factor in youth suicide.

Montessori schools are not exempt from bullying. Sometimes children come to the Montessori school later in their school career as the result of unresolved issues of aggression.

Poor social skills may be another cause of aggressive behaviour and parents and teachers need to have strategies in place to assist such children.

Research suggests that creating a caring environment in which a collaborative rather than a competitive emphasis is the best way to handle aggression. It requires an awareness and willingness to confront the issue.

Montessori once said “We must help the child to liberate himself from his defects without making him feel his weaknesses” (1956, p.143) and this seems to be backed up by current advice. ECE and primary school seem to be the best time to intervene; by secondary school it may be too late.

Older children have been shown to respond to a variety of programmes, particularly those that introduce a collaborative (versus a competitive) culture into the school.

Teaching children mediation techniques to lead to collaborative solutions is favoured over having adults who simply step in to require a negative behaviour to cease. Morris et al. (2000) suggest that education in non-violent conflict resolution should be a continuous process throughout primary school.

Others, including Montessori, attest to the power of environmental education (Basile & White, 2000) as a means of nurturing a caring attitude to all creatures on our earth.

And the last word from Dr Montessori:

“Do we believe and constantly insist that cooperation among the peoples of the world is necessary in order to bring about peace? If so, what is needed first of all is collaboration with children . . . All our efforts will come to nothing until we remedy the great injustice done the child, and remedy it by cooperating with him. If we are among the men of good will who yearn for peace, we must lay the foundation for peace ourselves, by working for the social world of the child.” (From the closing address to the Montessori International Congress in 1937.)

Bullying (from Childline South Africa) www.childinesa.org.za

The Role of Educators with regards to Bullying:

- Set an example by treating all children with respect.
- All schools should have an anti-bullying policy that seeks to protect all children. It is very important that everyone knows all forms of bullying are unacceptable.
- Be aware of the needs of the child who is a bully. Often bullying behaviour is a sign that the child is experiencing problems at home.
- Indicate to the child who is bullying that their behaviour is unacceptable AND help them find alternate, more positive ways of behaving and interacting.

"This is the period in which discipline becomes established: a form of active peace, of obedience and love, when work is perfected and multiplied, just as when the flowers in spring get their colors and prepare a distant harvest of sweet and nourishing fruit."
- The Absorbent Mind: Clío Montessori Press, 1994: p.251

"The Process of Normalization"

Gayle Thompson

In Montessori education, the term "normalization" has a specialized meaning. "Normal" does not refer to what is "typical" or "average" or even "usual." "Normalization" does not refer to a process of being forced to conform. Instead, Montessori used the terms "normal" and "normalization" to describe a unique process she observed in child development. *NAMTA website*

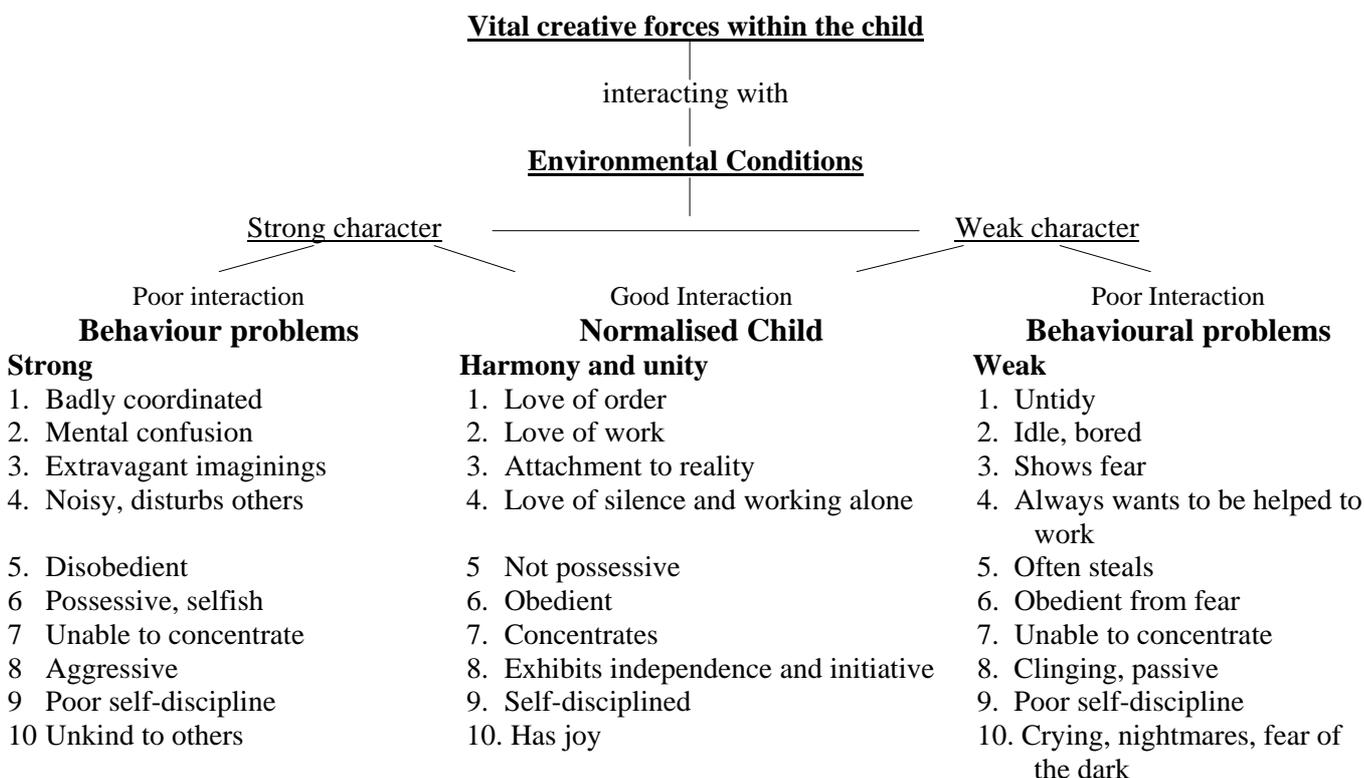
Montessori observed that when children are allowed freedom in an environment suited to their needs, they blossom. After a period of intense concentration, working with materials that fully engage their interest, children appear to be refreshed and contented. Through continued concentrated work of their own choice, children grow in inner discipline and peace. She called this process "normalization" and cited it as "**the most important single result of our whole work**" (The Absorbent Mind, 1949)

She went on to write,

"Only "normalised" children, aided by their environments, show in their subsequent development those wonderful powers that we describe: spontaneous discipline, continuous and happy work, social sentiments of help and sympathy for others.....An interesting piece of work, freely chosen, which has the virtue of inducing concentration rather than fatigue, adds to the child's energies and mental capacities, and leads him to self mastery..... One is tempted to say that the children are performing spiritual exercises, having found the path of self perfectionment and of ascent to the inner heights of the soul. (The Absorbent Mind, 1949)

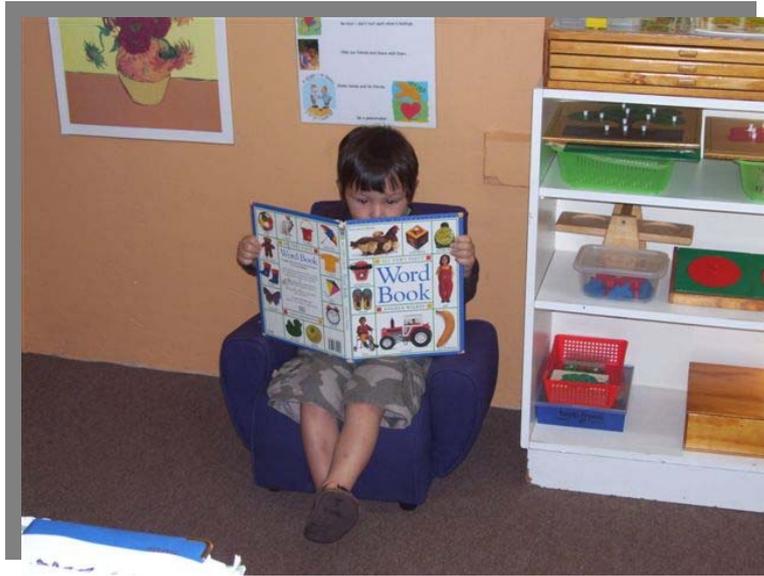
E.M.Standing (Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work, 1957) lists these as the characteristics of normalization: love of order, love of work, spontaneous concentration, attachment to reality, love of silence and of working alone, sublimation of the possessive instinct, power to act from real choice, obedience, independence and initiative, spontaneous self-discipline, and joy. Montessori believed that these are the truly "normal" characteristics of childhood, which emerge when children's developmental needs are met.

From Lesley Britton's book - **Montessori Play and Learn** – page 25 a chart here shows the behaviour problems on either side of Normalisation that occur when children with weak or strong characters have poor interaction within their environments.



"The child is the spiritual builder of mankind, and obstacles to his free development are the stones in the wall by which the soul of man has become imprisoned."

- The Absorbent Mind: Clio Montessori Press, 1994 : p. 201



"I would not be able to cite a single example of a conversion taking place without an



interesting task that concentrated the child's activities. There are wide varieties of conversions that have occurred in this way. Children of a nervous temperament have become calm. The depressed have regained their spirits, and all have advanced together along the path of

disciplined work, making progress through the outward manifestation of an inner energy which has found a means of expressions."

- The Secret of Childhood: Fides Publishers, 1966: p. 147

Children need boundaries - How to implement that into the classroom.

Talk given by Anne Cawood at Western Cape Regional Meeting.

Anne started her talk by giving examples of what she felt made an effective teacher. She felt that they set safe, firm and clear boundaries very quickly at the beginning of the journey. These non-negotiable ground rules need to be calmly and clearly stated and carried out **consistently** in a respectful, loving way. If the boundaries are tested, (and they will be), then consequences need to be enforced and in some instances, if necessary, the child needs to be isolated, preferably next to the teacher. Ineffective teachers, she felt rule through fear due to feeling threatened and often behave erratically.

Anne reminded us not to discuss children with others, in front of them and not to label them. Whatever is happening in our personal lives needs to be left at the door and we need to be fully present in the environment. We need to use I - language to indicate to the children how their behaviour makes us feel, e.g. "I see you have chosen to..." so that children learn that it is their **behaviour** that we don't like, not them. Little children do not yet have the verbal ability to express feelings and the only way to get rid of pent up feelings is to behave badly. From a young age we need to help children to get in touch with their feelings and teach them that it is okay to feel angry, frustrated, irritated etc, but not to hit, bite, scratch, yell, etc. **Allow feelings, limit behaviour.**

Anne also reminded us that children are born with a genetically-determined blueprint to be a certain way. How they eventually turn out is dependant on how the child and their temperament is handled. How adults react to the child will determine the child's behaviour in the future. Anne ended by saying that when children were asked what the turning point was in their lives that enabled them to triumph over difficult or abusive situations, it was often a teacher that had believed in them, and that they had carried that life long gift with them.

How does this fit with what we do as Montessorians?

Montessori thought of the child as a spiritual embryo, alive with possibilities, and yet the only thing we know about them is that they could be anything, but nobody knows what they will be or what they will do. What we do know is that they must eventually be able to operate on their own in the world and must therefore be shown the skills that it takes to function successfully while being protected by the warmth of our love and acceptance.

The Grace and Courtesy lessons that we use throughout, but especially in the beginning when new children start, are very clear examples of how to behave in a way that helps children understand what is expected of them individually and how their role impacts the larger community, of which they are a valued and active member.

The first activities that Montessori directresses introduce new children to are the exercises of Practical Life. Montessori wrote that experience had shown her that the Sensorial and Cultural activities should not be introduced before a child had shown concentrated work with Practical Life activities. Directresses are to watch for moments of concentration; this being the goal for every child, and when they occur, the role of the directress is not to interrupt.

Montessori was quite clear that any disruptive or socially unacceptable behaviour should always be checked. She recommends doing so by redirection rather than punishment. The directress must give the disruptive child something else to do. She also recommended that misbehaving children be shown positive attention, such as being taken aside and being shown something new as though they are very special.

"Interfere by all means to stop disturbances, but we need not punish or scold or admonish when we stop bad behaviour; we can ask the child to come and pick some flowers in the garden or offer a toy or any occupation that will appeal to it."

Montessori, M. The child, society and the world:
Unpublished speeches and writings (Pg.16). Oxford: Clio.

Gayle Thompson

SAMA's work on Best Practices in Montessori Education

As many of you know, the Exco has started working on a framework which will be developed by members throughout the country over the next few months examining Best Practices in Montessori Education.

As a starting point we have taken the Montessori Characteristics represented in a document Michael Dorer shared with us when he was in Cape Town a few years ago.

The main ideas being researched at the moment include:

- Mixed Age Classes
- The Prepared Environment
- Montessori Materials and Curriculum
- Repetition
- Movement
- Freedom of Choice
- Independence
- Respect
- The Montessori View of the Child
- The Trained Adult
- Discipline, Reward and Punishment

At the upcoming regional meetings (in the third and fourth terms) we plan to share with you what we have done so far and ask for input, feedback and your ideas. Please attend these meetings as it is likely that this document will form the backbone of any accreditation programme that SAMA implements in the near future.

More importantly though, if there is something you feel has been omitted, PLEASE send your thoughts through to me so that we can work on including as much as possible.

We know there is a wealth of experience and wisdom within our membership base – please share it with all of us so that the legacy of Montessori remains authentic. You can email me on president@samontessori.org.za and share any of your thoughts related to Best Practices in Montessori Education.

Sam Streak



Focus for August issue: Sports in Montessori schools
Deadline for submissions: 20 August

All articles are contributed by SAMA members. We would love to hear from our readers. Please send interesting snippets, valuable insights and amusing anecdotes to share with others and help make this newsletter an exciting and interesting one. If you feel you would like to contribute, please send to: admin@samontessori.org.za

Members Page

Cooperative games

Our children love games why not find out more about cooperative ones that encourage team work, problem solving, creative thinking and everyone is a winner!

I have include some examples here, but to find more just Google 'cooperative games', <http://www.freechild.org/gamesguide.pdf> is just one of the few places to look.

Hula Hoop Relay

Take a hula hoop and have the girls pass the hoop over their bodies while their hands remained linked. Can add another hoop to chase the first! Great fun and coordination.

Lego Building

Give one person a box of Lego blocks, wooden blocks, the other three have a picture of an item to build. The three together have to give the directions, with their backs to the builder, on what to build.

Colours

Cut wool of different colours, into short lengths, with enough lengths of each colour for each player. Hide bundles of colours in the garden and each member has to find one of each colour to complete the set.

If you do not have wool; have various words hidden in the garden. When all found, they put them together to make a sentence.

Human Knot

The group forms a tight circle. Each member reaches in with their right hands and grasps one of the right hands available. Repeat with left hands. Then ask them to unravel the knot.

People may not let go. The circle of hands is to remain unbroken. However, it may be necessary to change grips due to the angle of arms and bodies. One variation is for the group to stay silent during the entire activity.

- This I have used with different ages and works each time!

You can also purchase cooperative board games; I found mine from Nucleus Toys.

Jacky Price

In July 2007 I reviewed a website and book Frans Lanting's Life Through Time in what was then IMC eNews. Here's the link

<http://www.lifethroughtime.com/>

I have just found the book on the Exclusive Books sale for R 270 (about). This is the most amazing resource for the great lessons and classification of life. It's not the sort of book most people would even look at without knowing what a gem it is. If I still had a school I'd buy two - one for cards and one to keep as a book.

Sharon Caldwell



"Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees or the stars; you have a right to be here."
From Desiderata

Regional Meetings Update

Please diarise the following regional meetings that will be held during the month of August and September – Please come & enjoy a cup of coffee/tea with us.

- **Western Cape: 2nd August**
- Speaker: Gayle Thompson – “How to recruit the right families for your school”

- **Gauteng North: 2nd August**
- Speaker: Heidi Van Staden – “Classroom Management”

- **KZN: 23rd August**
- Speaker: To Be Confirmed

- **Gauteng South: 6th September**
- Speaker: To Be Confirmed

- **Eastern Cape: Date to be confirmed**
- Speaker: To be Confirmed

Exco members will be sharing any feedback/contributions towards developing our “Best Practice Document” for Southern Africa. We value your input & by attending our meetings we can all work towards putting our “Best Practice” in our Montessori Environments.

Sumaya – Host School Representative

From the Spring Issue of Montessori Life you will find an excellent article pertaining to character education, hence all the characteristics or virtues that normalization of the child brings about. Found on the web at:

Vardin, Patricia A "Character education in America". Montessori Life. Spring 2003. FindArticles.com. 21 Jul. 2008. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4097/is_200304/ai_n9190384

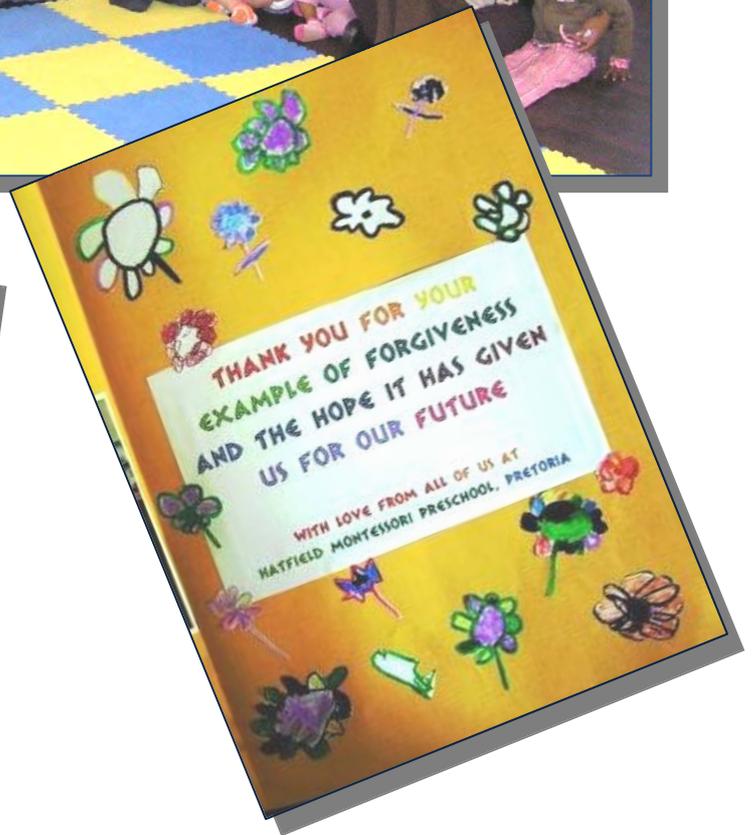
It is with a heavy heart that I hand over the task of editing the newsletter. My mother always said “give a busy woman a job and she will find the time to do it!” I need that time now to focus on less, but give more.

I have benefitted hugely through my involvement with SAMA; my computer skills have developed, communication skills were honed, and met some inspiring educators in the Montessori field. I think I was ‘normalised’ One thing it did do for me is to continue to reflect on my practices not only as a teacher but also as a member of a very valuable association. I urge all of you at one time or another, to give of your time in support and growth of SAMA.

I would like to thank all the Exco members with whom I have worked and a special thank you to Sam who drives this association with such fierce energy and determination, knowing that we can be the best there is in education.

Jacky Price

Hatfield Montessori School waving to Madiba in celebration of his birthday: 18 July



"I would not be able to cite a single example of a conversion taking place without an interesting task that concentrated the child's activities. There are wide varieties of conversions that have occurred in this way. Children of a nervous temperament have become calm. The depressed have regained their spirits, and all have advanced together along the path of disciplined work, making progress through the outward manifestation of an inner energy which has found a means of expressions."
- The Secret of Childhood: Fides Publishers, 1966: p. 147

Marketing

We are importers and distributors of
DR ED'S MONTESSORI EQUIPMENT.

Phone us for exceptional prices and quality

R & D Marketing

Ron and Doreen Macaulay

082 888 0696 OR (011) 460 0632

e-mail: sales@rdm.co.za

website: www.rdm.co.za

Childrens House

Official Distributors of Nienhuis Montessori
Materials

Tel: (021) 788 3160

Fax: (086) 619 5182

Email: childrenshouse@absamail.co.za

Edu Equipment

High quality locally manufactured Montessori
Equipment from

Toddler to Primary contact Dougie at Edu
Equipment Port Elizabeth.

Cell 0722116940 Fax 041-3791595 or

eduequipment@absamail.co.za

Early Language Materials

in full colour, printed and laminated

Pink, Blue and Green Series from R1800 for a
complete set

For more information please contact

tegan@allaboutmontessori.net

If you would like to advertise in
the SAMA Newsletter, please
send the relevant information
through to

admin@samontessori.org

For more information on Job Vacancies, Associate
Member(suppliers), Member schools and more, visit
SAMA website www.samontessori.org.za

Training



TWO-DAY MOVEMENT TRAINING WORKSHOPS

- * Neuro-educational development lecture
 - * Primitive and Postural reflexes
- * Understanding the supporting sensory systems
 - * Categories of Movement
- * Preparing the child for Learning Readiness
 - * Nutrition and Supplementation
- * The Move to Learn Developmental Sequence
 - * Outdoor Movement Programme
- * Full manual and Instructional DVD
 - * Assessment tools/Sample lessons

Upcoming workshops:

CAPE TOWN: 9 and 10 August 2008

GAUTENG: 23 and 24 August 2008

KZN (Durban): 6 and 7 September 2008

SWAZILAND: 13 and 14 September 2008

Please contact **Susanne van Niekerk** on 082 900
3192 or susannev@mweb.co.za for bookings and
further information.

Available SAMA Products:

- **The SAMA Recommended Curriculum** – an integration of A Montessori Recommended Curriculum with the Revised National Curriculum Statement. For queries and to order, contact the SAMA office. The curriculum is printed and bound, and is available to paid up SAMA Institutional Members for R250.00 and to all other categories of membership for R1000.
- **SAMA Policies and Procedures CDs** – a comprehensive compilation of government laws, acts, and policies on CD 1 and examples from various Montessori schools and resources to use in school management on CD 2, at R50.00 each. These prices are for school members only. All other categories of membership may purchase the CDs for R500 per set.
- **SAMA Parents Handbook** – a full colour, beautiful publication, useful to parents as an introduction to Montessori Education. This booklet covers basic Montessori philosophy and is the ideal starting point for parent education. These handbooks are available to SAMA School Members only at R25 per copy. For orders of 30 or more, additional postage will be added.
- **SAMA Centenary Scrapbook.** A beautiful full colour compilation of Southern African Centenary and 100 steps Stories and photos. Cost R250 per book plus R25 package and postage.

For more details contact: admin@samontessori.org.za

Audio Recordings of the SAMA Conference are now available

Most of the presentations for the 3 days of conference were recorded as MP3 files and are available on one CD for only R150 incl. postage.

Although the recordings were not done professionally (i.e. they are not edited), the sound quality is good and almost all of the talks contain the essence of what the speakers referred to. It is an excellent reference to go with the CD of speakers notes given to all conference delegates.

Please note that the audio CD will play off all computers but only certain CD players (ones that can accommodate MP3 files).

To order, you need to make your payment of R150 into the SAMA bank account, send your proof of payment through to Deirdre in the admin office (admin@samontessori.org.za or fax 041 5812874).

Orders close on the 31st July 2008. All orders will then be dispatched by 5th August 2008.

NATIONAL OFFICE: Eastern Cape: admin@samontessori.org.za

Telephone 041 5812 874, Fax 041 5812 874, Cell number 072 609 5979

Deirdre Gower	General Administrator	admin@samontessori.org.za
Lorraine Wright	Membership Administrator	lorraine@llm.co.za
Sam Streak	President	president@samontessori.org.za or sam@pemontessori.co.za
Susanne van Niekerk	Treasurer	susannev@mweb.co.za
Heidi van Staden	General Secretary	academy@netactive.co.za
Sharon Caldwell	Ordinary Member	sharoncaldwell@montessori.org
Sumaya Tar Mahomed	Ordinary Member	ably@yebo.co.za
Gayle Thompson	Ordinary member	tommysg@telkomsa.net