



August / September 2010

Newsletter for Parents of SAMA Member Schools

Dear Parents

Thank you all so much for the interest in the previous newsletter. I think that I sent out about 75 emails to parents wanting more information on their child's specific plane of development! I hope that you found the information interesting and useful. There is more information on the 'ages and stages' on the NAMTA website www.montessori-namta.org should you wish any further insight into this key Montessori philosophy.

In our members newsletter this month, I published some ideas regarding grace and courtesy and found an interesting link to citizenship that I thought was a good way of remembering that courtesy and civility could be an integrated into our classrooms and homes.

On the website www.educationworld.com you will find the following regarding the five themes of citizenship:

- **Honesty** is the basic theme of good citizenship. A person must be honest with others, and with himself or herself, in order to be a good citizen.
- **Compassion** is the emotion of caring for people and for other living things. Compassion gives a person an emotional bond with his or her world.
- **Respect** is similar to compassion but different in some ways. An important aspect of respect is *self-respect*, whereas compassion is directed toward others. Respect is also directed toward inanimate things or ideas as well as toward people. For example, people should have respect for laws. Finally, respect includes the idea of esteem or admiration, whereas compassion is a feeling people can have for others they don't necessarily admire.
- Out of honesty, compassion, and respect comes **Responsibility**, which includes both private, personal responsibility and public responsibility. Individuals and groups have responsibilities. Responsibility is about *action*, and it includes much of what people think of as good citizenship. You may wish to point out that one of the main responsibilities of students is *to learn*. They must educate themselves so that they can live up to their full potential.
- Finally, the theme of **Courage** is important to good citizenship. Human beings are capable of moving beyond mere goodness toward greatness. Courage enables people to do the right thing even when it's unpopular, difficult, or dangerous.

In keeping with the theme of our last newsletter, I have included a few simple ideas for each age group within the Montessori environment to introduce citizenship as a way of instilling grace and courtesy. I have adapted them slightly from the classroom ideas so that they may be more practical in your home situations.

We should never be afraid of working with profound ideas with our children, because we are in fact working with profound human beings. We are educators and nurturers of the human potential.

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3-6 YEARS	6-9 YEARS	9-12 YEARS	12-15 YEARS
Respect for self, others and the environment.	Responsibility to self, others and the environment.	Truth in friendship. Compassion towards others.	Responsibility to the community.
<p>As adults we need to model these respectful behaviours at all times. Show the child that one way of demonstrating respect for others is by greeting them politely. Encourage your child to show respect for his belongings – this will translate into respect for things that are not his as well. Have colour coded waste bins for recycling. These children are in a sensitive phase for order and will readily sort paper and plastic into such bins. This will promote an awareness of his contribution towards his environment and serves as an indirect preparation for further work in environmental education.</p>	<p>Create opportunities for the children that highlights responsibility. Have chores that your child can participate in. Setting the table, feeding a pet etc. Discuss the word responsibility. What is our responsibility to ourselves? Do we have a responsibility towards others? If so, how could we fulfil that responsibility? Share with the children the responsibilities that you as their parent have. As this is the age for ‘fairness’, they will respond well to understanding that we all have our share of responsibilities.</p>	<p>The 9-12 year olds in my experience moves into a much more mature understanding of friendships and need guidance and nurturing regarding their social groups. They need their parents support in understanding the boundaries within friendships. Honest and open discussions where parents can include some of the life-lessons s/he has learned over time would be valuable in helping your 9-12 year old.</p>	<p>The following suggestion works best within the school environment, but parents are reminded that as for the 3-6 years children, the adolescent needs good role models. They need to see you as parents demonstrating your commitment and responsibility to the community. Ideas here could include service at an retirement village, wet-nose centre, children’s homes or volunteering through church or similar organisations for charity functions.</p>