



November 2010

Newsletter for Parents of SAMA Member Schools

Dear Parents

*I am sharing with you this month, an excerpt from an article on **creativity** written by Sumaya Tar Mohamed, principal of First Friends Montessori. The issue of creativity is an important one for Montessori schools, because we encourage a lot of independent expression by offering a variety of materials and opportunities in this area. For many children – especially at the preschool stage, the joy is not so much the end product but the process involved in creating their work of art. A non-interfering adult and a variety of materials will enhance the child's experience in this area.*

What is Creativity?

We tend to think of 'creativity' as art i.e. drawing, painting, writing decorating etc, but Montessori believed that everyone has within themselves creative powers. The key requirements in Montessori for creative expression are based on concrete or sensorial experiences. Even great artists have a subject to paint and through observation, that artist attains knowledge of that subject.

In order for a child to develop creativity there must be a sensorial and concrete base, through which the imagination can emerge.

Here are some thoughts on everyday activities from a Montessori classroom where creative expression is found. Of course all work is creative, these are just some examples that you could include in your daily home life and where the children may have the freedom to express themselves creatively.

- Practical Life: flower arranging, setting the table
- Language: vocabulary enrichment, rhymes, encouraging free speech & word games
- Cultural: allowing the freedom to research/explore aspects of culture that leads to creativity.
- Exposing the young child to learn about different cultures – discuss similarities and differences in food, transport, clothes, customs etc.

Children are confined/stifled and creativity is destroyed when:

- Freedom of choice is taken away
- Trauma that a child has experienced is not dealt with appropriately and feelings surrounding the trauma are suppressed
- Adults interfere
- Environment is not well prepared or hasn't got sufficient equipment

We must always remember that children learn through their senses. Remember Aristotle's quote, "There is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses."

In traditional schools, most art activities have the children all creating the same artwork at the same time. This may be good for following instructions, but is not always creative. The Montessori environment, with its variety of art materials, which the child may choose from freely provides ample opportunity to explore, create and perfect their creations. The process of creative thinking allows the children to express their emotions and that can bolster self-esteem.

"A man is capable of becoming anything...making use of his own will in his contact with the environment; he develops his faculties and thus becomes in a sense his own creator." *Secret of Childhood*

"Creation here means that mysterious primordial occurrence which gives rise to something which at first did not exist, something which is later destined to grow in accordance with vital laws." *The Absorbent Mind*