



September 2007

Message from the President

In the last newsletter there was mention of a book called “Last Child in the Woods” by Richard Louv. This book, along with “Toxic Childhood” by Sue Palmer, are two books every parent should read.

Both books examine the challenge of raising children in the 21st century, with technology developing at a phenomenal rate. Although it is appropriate for children to embrace the times in which they live, we as adults, need to be sure they do not become slaves to the things that are intended to make life easier.

While Richard Louv’s book focuses on the nature-deficit child, Sue Palmer examines all aspects of 21st century life – diet, nutrition, TV...the list is extensive and her research thoroughly done.

In our national newsletter for schools, one focus was Observation. Maria Montessori often said that this was the most important part of the work of a directress/teacher. She extended this to parents too, encouraging them to stand back from the situation and observe their child. Seeing what is actually happening rather than what we think is happening can often mean the difference between a peaceful resolution and conflict. This is particularly applicable in those endless sibling scenarios!

In the Tao of Montessori, Catherine McTamaneay writes, *“Our only choice is to watch carefully, to understand how this child’s path differs from that child’s...Observe. Then, when you have finished, observe some more. When you have made some choice, added some feature or removed some obstacle to better serve the child, observe some more. There is nothing, nothing, we can do to stop the child from learning, from growing, from becoming an adult.”*

We wish every one in all our member schools good luck for the final term of the year and thank SAMA School Members for their ongoing commitment and support.

Sam Streak
SAMA President

SAMA (Southern African Montessori Association) is an organisation established more than 5 years ago. Our aim is to associate and unite those concerned in the service and development of Montessori education in Southern Africa. Our membership is broad-based and diverse. We have members throughout South Africa, Namibia and Swaziland and are proud of our successful efforts to create a professional and supportive structure for Montessorians in the region. Each member school contributes an annual child levy as well as membership fees to ensure our work to further promote Montessori education can continue. Your child school’s is a valuable member of SAMA.

The child’s environment in the home:

- Create a special space with a table or desk where the child can access own drawing materials, books or games.
- Access to variety of appropriate books, don’t stop reading to them.
- Have family hobbies and outings. Walk cycle, camp, visit museums, create collections, weed, bake or paint together.
- Do things with your child, show interest in what they do, involve them in what you do.
- Beware of too many so-called educational toys, allow for imaginative and creative free play.
- Positively reinforce all the small good things your child does, rather than the things they don’t do. Be the role model.

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