



P A R E N T N E W S L E T T E R



Happy Spring!

www.mehermontessori.org

april 08



NEWS

Hope everyone had a nice Spring Break. Our second set of Parent Conferences will take place the week of May 12–16. Sign-ups will be the week before showing the times available for conferences. At the conference you will receive a written progress report. However, you certainly do not have to wait for a formal parent conference to talk to your child's teacher. Teachers always have time for informal conferences. Just ask.



Camp Surf

The upper elementary class will be going to Camp Surf from April 28 to May 2.



Summer School

Summer school forms went out. We're having some fun and educational field trips. Summer School dates are June 16 – July 25. Form are due back by Friday, April 18th.

School Shirt Day

Don't forget! **Friday, April 25th**, is Meher's School Shirt Day! Let's have 100% participation so every class can have a party.



Parents must keep their children with them at all times once they have been picked up. Children are not allowed to wander off alone or go into their empty classroom just because their parents are here. Also, please do not allow your child to open the gate. Only adults should open the gate.

**NOTICE
TO
PARENTS**



CLASSROOM NEWS



Mrs. Thomas' Class

We are now in the season of Spring the most lovely of all seasons with so much excitement going on in the birds, animals and plant kingdoms. The earth is filled with lush green grass and an array of so many beautiful and colorful flowers to add to the beauty of Spring. All of us in our classroom are excited and thrilled, for our Australian finches as they became parents of three young ones on the 1st of April. It's no April fool. By the way they spent their "Spring Break" at Jazette's house where they also spent their Christmas vacation. Jazette and her mom are happily and willingly taking care of them during our school holidays. We are so happy for our birds that they have such a good holiday home. Thank you very much Jazette and Karen for your kind heart and love of birds.

Congratulations Julia Hernandez. We are so happy and honored to know that Julia Hernandez is one of our top sellers at the School Fundraiser with a total of \$439 with 41 items sold. We are also proud to

know that our class ranked second selling over \$1099. Thank you for your effort and time.

Our March birthday celebrants were Miranda Rojas, Harsh Bhagat and Isaak Zenteno-Higgins. They all turned 5 years old.

We had our Easter egg hunt and party on Friday the 21st of March.



All of our children had their own choice of Easter baskets brought from home with plastics eggs filled with varieties of goodies. We would like to thank all the parents who

took extra time to come over and help with the hiding of the eggs for the egg hunt and all the parents who generously contributed towards the Easter party that was held after our 1st play time. Our children enjoyed the egg hunt as well as the party.

On the 28th of March the lower Elementary class hosted a Partnership Breakfast that was attended by all the graduate students and parents. The graduate projects were displayed on the walls. Our children had done such an excellent job on their projects. All of our graduate's parents attended the breakfast served by their children and was so proud



of their child's work displayed on the walls. Our graduates are Julia Bañuelos, Jessica Basallo, Bryanna Lopez, Tiffany Louie, Jennifer Luy, Victor Puente, Lia Ramos and Kanan Yu. We are proud of your great efforts and good work.

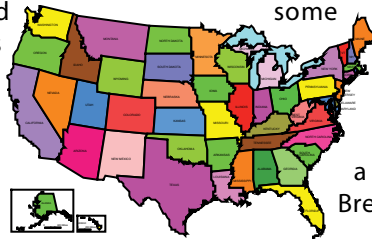
Right now our graduates are into a lot of higher activities in many areas, as math, language, geography and botany. In the math area, they have mastered all activities leading up to addition, subtraction, association of decimal system, beads and card materials and are now into multiplication. Division and fractions will soon follow. They are all excellent readers and have good coordination for writing with lowercase and cursive writings.

In geography they are working on puzzle maps and matching each country with flags and postal stamps. Asian and African countries seems to be their favorites. Maybe because they have lots of countries and lots of flags to be matched. Besides this, they love to trace each state of the United States, color them and write the names in cursive. Some graduates have finished 35-42 states. It's just amazing. There have been times when I wished I were one of them.

We were 100% on School Shirt

Day again last month. Thank you dear parents for helping your child to be winners again. A pizza party is awaiting upon our return from Spring Break.

Our class is a wonderful place to be. It's a joy to see all of our children progressing so well in their own way. My grateful thanks to Mrs. Suh, Ms. Muñoz and Ms. Avila for their constant help and involvement in the classroom and also Mrs. Ruvalcaba who comes in the afternoon and does various interesting activities with the children. We all enjoy the way she does it for we know that she herself is enjoying whatever activities she is doing with them either reading a book or



some action activities. Thank you Mrs. Ruvalcaba. Keep up the good spirit.

Hope you all had a very happy Spring Break.

With Love,
Mrs. Thomas
Mrs. Suh
Ms. Muñoz
Ms. Avila



Mrs. Weerakkody's Class

Dear Parents and families,

March arrived very quietly. We had many celebrations to prepare during the month.

The graduates of my class started visiting Mr. George's class as a group. They went a few days a week. At the beginning some were a bit nervous, but they began to feel comfortable and enjoyed the projects. It was very nice to see them mature as the weeks progressed. Our Partnership Breakfast was the culmination of all the hard work with Mr. George and the graduating students. The parents all came and viewed the projects and enjoyed a wonderful breakfast that was provided by Meher and laid out by Mrs. Muñoz, Mrs. Chavez, and Ms. Muñoz. It is a great beginning journey for our first graders.

We celebrated St. Patrick's Day on Monday, March 17th. The early part of March we did a few projects, learned a few Irish songs, did some Irish dancing (the Jig), and also played some games. Mrs. Ruvalcaba help us with all these fun activities.

We had a great little party in the afternoon. We made green jello squares with the knox box recipe. We enjoyed green juice, cookies,

etc. Naolin's mom came to help us. We thank all the families for their contributions and your efforts.

With the arrival of Spring we learned about the life cycle of a butterfly. We read the book, *"The Very Hungry Caterpillar,"* and made some beautiful butterflies which we hung on our stair way.

Our Easter egg hunt and party went off very well. Thanks to the families that sent lots of filled plastic eggs and goodies to fill our empty eggs. The children had a lot of fun coloring hard boiled eggs with the special dye. Many parents participated and helped the teachers hide the eggs. The children took their decorated Easter bags for the hunt. They had so much fun finding the eggs and looking at all the candy and special treats they got. Thank you parents for making it so special.

After the hunt, we had a nice Easter lunch. We had a variety of dishes like burritos, ham and cheese sandwiches, rice, macaroni and cheese, fruit salad, chips and dip, ice cream and cookies. It was well attended by many parents who were willing to help set up, serve and clean up. Thank you for all your help.

We made some flowers to decorate our stairway. This puts us in the mood for Spring. Many more projects are in the making.



Mr. Page and Ms. Peña's Class

In our cooking class we made the green jello squares for St. Patrick's Day, cut out shamrock shapes out of toast and decorated in green butter, colored eggs for Easter, and made sandwiches with cut out shapes like chicks, ducks and bunnies. We will make some deviled eggs and some chicks with eggs. We are planning a lot of exciting projects with new recipes.

We achieved 100% on our School Shirt Day last month and had a great pizza party for our reward. Don't forget April's School Shirt Day is Friday, April 25th. So far we have won for every month since September. Thank you parents for helping your child's class win 100%.

All the children are progressing very steadily with their learning activities. Many are completing their map work. A few new students will be starting the map of the world.

I hope all the families and my students had a very fun filled and restful spring break.

I need to thank all my great helpers in the class for the great job they are doing with all the students.

Thank you with Love,
Mrs. Weerakkody
Ms. Martinez
Ms. Mills
Ms. Avila
Mrs. Ruvalcaba



Our classroom is going very well. We are happy with the progress of our children. Our children are so happy. They are busy, busy, busy. The classroom has a nice quiet buzz of activity. During the work time in the morning, the sound level is like that of a large and hungry family sitting down to a wonderful dinner after a long day. As the family begins to eat, the noise level dies down. The task at hand is eating and everyone is eating and enjoying the food. Certainly there's some socializing, but it's secondary to eating.

In the same way, in a Montessori classroom the children are busily working with the Montessori materials and that is the primary activity. The children are absorbed in their work. There's some socializing, but it's secondary as the primary "food" is their work. They're naturally absorbed in their work.

Our Partnership Project Children were working very hard and they were happy and excited to join Mr. George's children. We had our Partnership Breakfast. It was wonderful to share with the parents. The children and teachers had the opportunity to see the beautiful work they did in the past nine weeks.

We had an ice cream day to celebrate 100% school shirt day. The

children enjoyed it very much. Let's do it again on Friday, the 25th of this month.

We enjoyed our Easter Egg Hunt day. The children were nervous and happy but they had a great time. Thank you to Emma Cadena's mom. She provided the beautiful Easter baskets. Also thank you to the parents who made the contributions of plastic eggs and hard-boiled eggs. The children took home a lot of goodies. We want to say thank you to Ethan Lepe's and Luz-Elena Sanchez' mothers. They are helping make materials in the classroom by cutting magazines for our gluing work.

The Montessori Method emphasizes giving children a large vocabulary and we teach both simple and elaborate names of everything. We've recently been working with my older children with Animals and their Sounds. So they've learned that a wolf howls, a puppy whines, a kitten meows (but a cat meows), etc. They love learning all these things. Additionally this builds on their lessons with Animals and their Young, Animals and their Homes, etc.

The older children are also learning about the parts of speech – from a functional point of view. They learn about what a noun does and how an adjective tells us something about the noun. This is done without the names of the parts of speech. The

same is true of verbs (action words), conjunctions (joiners) and other parts of speech. When the children get to Mr. George's class, they intensely study all that – but there is a good healthy introduction in our primary classes.

Each year we give achievement tests to the oldest children in our classroom. And every year they surprise us with how well they do. It's not unusual for our children to test a couple of grade levels ahead of normal developmental standards. And what makes that even more remarkable, most of our work in the classroom is with materials and subjects that are not a part of traditional school curriculum. For instance, our children learn a great deal of geography, science and language that is not even in the public school curriculum until later grades. That advanced material never shows up in the achievement test as something to be tested on.

Hooray! Our class was number one for our Spring fundraiser. Special Thanks go to Isaac De Santiago whose family sold \$842 with 77 items!

And don't forget our next school shirt day is on Friday the 25th; let's have 100% again.

Mr. Page
Ms. Peña
Mrs. Rivera



A song for you and your child:

Yankee Doodle

*Yankee Doodle went to town
A-riding on a pony
Stuck a feather in his hat
And called it macaroni.
Yankee Doodle, keep it up
Yankee Doodle dandy
Mind the music and the step
And with the girls be handy.*

*Father and I went down to camp
Along with Captain Gooding
And there we saw the men and boys
As thick as hasty pudding.
Yankee Doodle, keep it up
Yankee Doodle dandy
Mind the music and the step
And with the girls be handy*

*There was Captain Washington
Upon a slapping stallion
A-giving orders to his men
I guess there was a million.
Yankee Doodle, keep it up
Yankee Doodle dandy
Mind the music and the step
And with the girls be handy*

*Yankee Doodle is a tune
That comes in mighty handy,
The enemies all run away,
At Yankee Doodle Dandy!
Yankee Doodle, keep it up
Yankee Doodle dandy
Mind the music and the step
And with the girls be handy*

HAPPY SPRING!



**SCHOOL
CENTS** 

**SHOP AND LOG RECEIPTS
BY MAY 15TH
TO HELP YOUR SCHOOL**

Participating in the School Cents program at Montebello Town Center is an easy and fun way to support your school! Participating schools earn a guaranteed Visa gift card prize of \$250 to \$2500!

To help, **simply bring your original receipts from Montebello Town Center stores and restaurants dated September 15, 2007 – May 15, 2008 to the Guest Services kiosk** located in Center Court near the Macy's Home Store.

Schools earn ten (10) points per dollar spent at any store, restaurant, eatery or vendor cart and five (5) points for each dollar spent at JCPenney, Mervyn's and both Macy's stores.

You can view current points and information online at www.montebellotowncenter.com by typing "School Cents" in the "Search Our Site" section, or by calling (800) 539-3273.

Mr. George's Class

This was Appreciation month. Many thanks goes out to Nicholas' mom Cathy for her art project on St. Patrick's Day. Maybe she can be our art teacher next year.

I appreciate the work and food that was prepared by my staff and parents at our Easter party. I enjoyed the deviled eggs prepared by Mrs. Yoshida who also showed the children how to color their Easter eggs and make deviled eggs. Much thanks goes to the parents who helped with the Easter egg hunt.

Much thanks goes to Mrs. Muñoz, Mrs. Chavez, Ms. Muñoz, Mrs. Yoshida and my wonderful parents who set up and cleaned up the Partnership Breakfast for the Primary Graduates. Almost all of the parents and their children arrived and enjoyed their projects and conversations with me. I have counted 9 children so far moving up to the Upper Elementary class. I commend the enthusiasm of the primary students and the work of Taylor, Renae, Isabella Alvarez, Isabella Liu, Blanca-Yadira and Hannah as mentors. Their enthusiasm was transferred to most of my students who wanted to show off their talents as writers and artists.

Mrs. Thames-Bell did a wonderful

job with my class while I was with the 25 primary students. They showed enthusiasm in doing their projects.

Mr. George
Ms. Thames



Mr. Harrod's Class

From the list of over 30 names suggested, our class decided on the name, "Enrique," for our magnificent, hard working, one dollar, little plunger. Many thanks to all at the Partnership Breakfast and the children in our class who gave us names for our wonderful, drain clearing plunger. Enrique, you will no longer work in anonymity. You can know that you are greatly appreciated and loved. Thank you, Enrique, for making our school clean and healthy.

The 6th-graders also now write essays every day. They work on area and volume everyday.

Our Easter egg hunt was a hit. In the past the kids found all the eggs in 5 minutes. This time Norma, Mr. Harrod's daughter, her husband, and Mr. Harrod hid the eggs completely out of sight. The kids took 25 minutes to find the eggs, except for two that they never found. One was hidden behind a plant in the planter box. The other was hidden between the planter box and the building, under some leaves and down by the fence that borders the alley. The children found the ones under my hat, in my pocket and in the trash

can.

We had a trip to the Huntington and Monrovia Canyon. In both cases the docents and the rangers were very complimentary about how much the children knew. The docents said that our children knew a lot more than the other schools that visit the Huntington or Monrovia Canyon. Maybe it is because our children are receiving a Montessori education.

In history the 5th-graders just finished the Revolutionary War and the founding of our nation and our founding fathers. What a great country we have! Our country is run by a constitution that outlines a separation of powers. There is no dictator; the constitution is what goes on from administration to administration.

The 5th-graders finished Alexander the Great, and work now on Ancient Rome. The 4th-graders learned about the Mexican Revolution, the Mexican period of CA history and have started the California Gold Rush.

There were a lot of good feelings again at the Partnership Breakfast. The parents smiled as they read their child's research. The parents talked and listened to each other, until they finally had to leave because their cars were interfering with the hiding of the eggs for the



primary Easter egg hunts.

I am very proud of our children in the 9–12 year-old class for working so well with the 3rd-graders who came to our class. The pairings for the research were: Eli-Soul-Travus, Adan-Isabella, Michael-Juan Antonio, Samuel-Livette, Jessica-Sofia, Desiree-Renae, Sophia-Taylor, Vicente-Ernesto, Anna is - Roxanne, Antonio-Daniel, Jordan-Dana, Xavier-Gabriella and Miles-Adriel.

For three or four afternoons the 3rd-graders came into our room and huddled with their partner. Their heads would be down reading the reference books or talking softly and writing. Upon finishing the written research and the illustration, they brought them to me. All three of us would go over the writing especially to make sure their work was ready to put up on our bulletin boards. The 3rd-graders did a good job of listening to the help our older kids gave to them. The research produced was excellent.

Mrs. Muñoz, Mrs. Chavez and Ms. Muñoz set up the tables to look great. The flowers were beautiful. They made the bagels, fruit, croissants and cream cheese on the food table look well ordered and delicious. The children spent about 1/3 of the previous day cleaning the room, until it was spic-and-span. The

good feelings at the partnership breakfast were the result of a lot of work by both children and adults.

For 15–30 minutes each day Mr. Harrod reads a book about history or the natural world to the class. While listening to the book, the children do art work. We recently finished a book of historical fiction about a real California Indian who spend about 20 years alone on San Nicolas Island, one of the Channel Islands. She was alive during the 19th century. We recently started another book of historical fiction about a Spanish land grant rancho during the Mexican period of California history.

The class works on integers currently. Integers are positive and negative numbers. For example what is $+9 + -4$? I really have fun teaching integers. It is creative and gives me a great feeling of satisfaction when the children start to get the math.

Samuel Alvarado, Michael Magdangal, Adan Franco, Eli Chavez and Dave Harrod



After School Art Class

Once again, we have a great group of children filling the places in both classes. We have completed the fourth class of this six week cycle. The next class will be held on Tuesday, April 22nd and the last class of this cycle will be held on April 29th.

Recently, the primary class did step by step drawings of animals. They did very well with this project. We can see their drawing skills improving a lot since the start of this school year.

The elementary children have been doing very challenging exercises to help with their understanding of how to shade forms so that they look three dimensional.

For the last two classes we will be concentrating on some fun drawing projects of simple plants and flowers.



The primary children will be drawing flowers with oil pastels.

Through drawing the flowers, the children will be given the opportunity to become more aware of the beauty found in nature at this time of year.

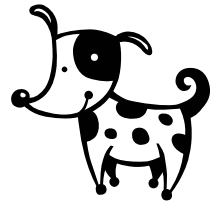
Gail Shaeffer
Linda Yoshida




Computer Class

Hello everyone. I hope you all had a great spring break. Before break started both the Techno People and the Mega Snakes finished their web pages. They were both well-behaved, enthusiastic learners. They had fun and were sad to see computer class end but one group must end for another to begin and I have many asking, "When do we start computer class?" To answer that question.... in the next couple of weeks I will be starting two new classes. I will let the children in those groups know soon when they will begin.

Ms. Muñoz



S C H O O L
C E N T E R S

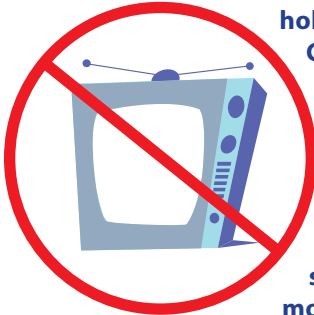


**LAST DAY
TO LOG RECEIPTS IS
THURSDAY, MAY 15TH!!!**

**AT THE
MONTEBELLO
TOWN CENTER!!!**

National Turn Off Television Week

SUNDAY, APRIL 20TH TO THURSDAY, APRIL 24TH



Mark your calendars! The Meher Library will be holding the 2nd Annual Turn Off the TV and READ Challenge in conjunction with National Turnoff week. The Meher Challenge will begin Sunday April 20 and continue through Thursday April 24. On Friday, April 25, the children will be given a small prize for each day that they refrained from watching TV and playing video or computer games. Last year's Challenge was such a great success but we hope to have even more participation this year! Challenge booklets will go out on Friday April 18th!

Primary Daycare

Hello everyone! Welcome back! We believe that our kids have enjoyed their Spring break.

This month we are listening to stories about rainy day weather, community workers and Earth Day.



We will follow up with a craft that goes with our storytime.

If you are interested in reading to the group, please see Mrs. Ruvalcaba!

Enjoy spring time everyone!

Daycare Staff



Elementary Daycare

Children continue to love the treats! They have been enjoying all the new games. We will be looking forward to some summer time treats soon. If you have any suggestions feel free to let me know.

Thank you.
Ms. Avila



Huntington Library Art Trip

On March 27th, Mr. Harrod's class, many parent chaperones, Mr. Harrod and I visited the Huntington Library to take a docent led tour of the American art collection. For many days prior to the trip, the children learned vocabulary that is associated with viewing and discussing works of art. By the day of the trip, they were all quite familiar with the art vocabulary and they showed impressive understanding of how to view art and the different aspects involved in creating art.

Mr. Harrod and I couldn't have been more thrilled when we saw how much the children understood and how they seemed to genuinely enjoy learning about and viewing the historical American paintings and sculpture.

The all the children wrote down their strongest impressions right after the art tour. Here are the comments that most of the children gave to me.

Adan Franco – I liked the Bronco Buster replica. The docent told us that it weighed over 100 pounds. It showed us how a cowboy looked and lived. It showed how he was training a horse so that he could ride it.

Vicente Sarmiento – I learned how to identify different kinds of brush strokes.

Michael Magdangel – The thing I liked at the Huntington is the Matterhorn painting because when I looked at it, it made me feel cold.

Daniel Pedroarias – I liked the painting called the "State Fair" because of the clowns and the tent. Gabriella Foreman – I learned that American artists do not only live in America.

Miles Ballesteros – I saw a painting that the tour guide showed us called "Strawberriing". She told us that the first time you see it you spot a girl in red picking strawberries and it makes you feel warm.

Eli Chavez – I liked the landscape paintings because the artist showed how big an area was by making the people and the animals in the scene small.

Dana Tsuruta – I learned that Mr. Huntington built the library and collected the artwork.

Soul Villalobos – I liked Mr. Church's paintings because they looked real. I learned that artists used bright colors to show one of the main things in a picture.

Jessica Carranza – I liked the statues of the dogs that were made for Mr. Huntington as a present.

Adriel Ramos – My favorite painting was "Breakfast in Bed" by Mary Cassatt because it showed care and love between the mother and baby.

Desiree Delgado – Diana was goddess of the hunt. You can always tell who she is because she is shown with an animal and a bow and arrow.

Xavier Ordaz – I learned that Mr. Huntington had to hire people to build a library for his books because he had so many. He had to move his books from the chairs so that people could sit on them.

Jordan Fucci – I liked the sculptures and learning about how they were made.

In summary, it is hard to put into words what a wonderful experience this was for me as I watched the children enjoying and understanding a period in art history that many adults never have the opportunity to become acquainted with. It was one of those times when the intangible rewards of teaching come to fruition in the enthusiastic and knowledgeable expressions of a great group of children.

—Gail Shaeffer



Contemporary Botanical Watercolors
by
Gilly Shaeffer



April 4 to May 1, 2008
10:00 to 3:30 P.M. Daily

CARRIAGE HOUSE GALLERY
(Next to the Boddy House)

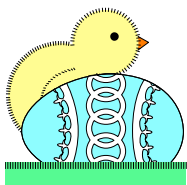
DESCANSO GARDENS

1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada, California 91011
Gallery Telephone 818-949-0125

Bring this invitation for 50% discount on garden admissions fee
for you and one guest during this show.

www.gillyshaeffer.com

ALTADENA NEWS



APRIL EVENTS

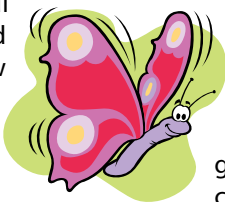
SPRING BREAK – School will be closed April 7th – 11th. We will re-open April 14th. Have a wonderful spring holiday.

PARENT — TEACHER CONFERENCES – We will have parent-teacher conferences the week of April 21st – Sign-up for conferences will be on the coat rack April 14th. This is a wonderful time to see how your child is doing in School and how we can work together to help your child become a fantastic citizen.

EASTER PARTY – We had a great time at our annual Easter egg hunt and party. Thank you to all the parents that helped with the hunt and contributed to our party. The children love the hunt and especially the confetti eggs that we all had fun cracking on their heads!!!!

HOP-A-THON – The children hopped their little hearts out on Friday, March 28th. Thank you for all the contributions to a very great cause – Muscular Dystrophy. Prizes will be coming soon.

Mrs. Hyde's Class – The children are all doing so well. The little one's love the continents, number rods, and sand paper letters. The older group loves subtraction, reading and naming all the states. The children did a great job of decorating their own Easter bucket. A big thanks goes to Ms. McCray and Ms. Avila for directing them in this art project.



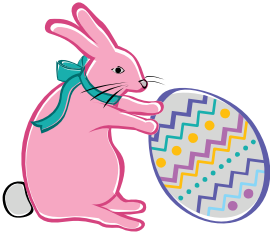
Butterflies – We are having so much fun watching our caterpillars grow. They are almost at the chrysalide stage. When they turn into Butterflies we will observe them for a few days and then let them fly free.

RE-ENROLLMENT – Don't be left out – re-enrollment is due April 4th.

SUMMER SCHOOL – Packets for Summer School will be out the end of May. Deposit is due May 23rd.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS – Mayze Bryant (4), Manny Gimenez(5). Happy Birthday!

St. Patrick's Day



Easter buckets!



Dr. Seuss Day

"The child can only develop by means of experience in his environment. We call such experience work."

—Dr. Maria Montessori

ORGANIZING THE HOME ENVIRONMENT TO SUIT CHILDREN

BY POLLI SOHOLT

REPRINTED FROM AMI/USA NEWS, MAY 2003

There are ways that the children's possessions and living spaces can be arranged to enhance their development. Naturally, as the child matures, changes will need to be made in the home to reflect the changing needs of the child. The period from 3 to 6 years old calls for some special attention because of the child's budding independence and highly acute sense of order. While the child may not always voluntarily put his things away, he is keenly aware of anything in his environment that is changed or out of place. This is a natural tendency, and if we provide an environment where order is deemed important, the child will be more peaceful and continue to develop his ability to order things. This tendency begins at birth, and fades in young childhood, so if we want to encourage order, it is wise to provide an ordered environment for very young children. If we examine several topics related to the home environment, we can find ways to organize their things that will enhance their development.

Containers for Children's Belongings

In order for young children to make use of their natural tendency for order, we have to create an order that makes sense to the children. They respond well to each item having a specific place in the house, so it is important to make decisions carefully about where things will be kept, and not move things around on a whim. Many toys and materials such as large vehicles, dolls, and plastic animals can be kept on a shelf without containers, each with its own place. The children will take pride in placing their things on shelves in an attractive manner, and they enjoy the visual effect of seeing their toys and possessions displayed. Some possessions such as blocks, Lego, small animals, or cars and doll clothes are better stored in containers. When choosing containers, it is important to select



one that can be placed on the shelf available without overlapping the space. This adds to the visual pleasure of viewing possessions put away, and adds to the calming effect of having an exact place for everything. It is also important to put out only the number of blocks or small cars for which the child can be reasonably responsible. A young three year old may only be able to keep track of five small cars, and a six year old may be able to keep track of ten. The remaining cars can be stored out of sight and out of reach, and parents can help the children rotate cars whenever the child wants to use different ones. That way the child can have variety, but there will still be only five cars out at a time. Keep in mind that the containers that they are using to store cars at three years old might be used for something different when they are eight or 10 years old. As their interests and needs change, so will the storage of their belongings.

The little chests or drawers that are used to store nuts and bolts work very well for the children to store their small action figures. This solves the problem of the accompanying pieces getting lost and eliminates the dust problem. Once the children have these storage chests, they will continue to figure out ways they can use them as they mature. Chances are they will still be using them for something when they become adults!

Shelf units suitable for young children. It is important for the children to be able to put things back on the shelves themselves, so the top shelf needs to be low enough so that the child can easily place items on it without reaching over her head. When the child is older, these shelves can be screwed to the wall one on top of the other, so that they can be used for bookshelves or display of objects interesting to an older child.

It is wise to have some shelves in most of the common rooms of the house. We tend to think about storing children's toys

and materials only in their rooms or in a playroom. At this young age, the children want to spend time in adult company, so it works well to have a small shelf unit in the kitchen, living room, and family room, in addition to the child's own room. Because of floor coverings, many families find that the paints and clay tend to work better on the kitchen shelves, and the toys and materials that will not damage the carpet in other rooms. The children will take items from one room to the next, and this is generally not a problem, as long as they are returned to the appropriate place at the end of the day.

Clean up materials

Young children are happy to clean up messes as they occur. The key to instilling this responsibility is to provide the tools they need to do so where they are readily accessible all the time. If the children have to come find an adult to get them a sponge or rag every time there is a spill, they will be distracted from the task at hand and may not be responsible for the clean-up. A small carpet sweeper can be hung on the wall or placed inside a closet door so that the children can carpet sweep up any debris dragged in on their shoes. A small bucket with a damp sponge (no water) can be placed on their art shelf or nearby so that they will be able to wipe up any mishaps with watercolors.

File cabinet

Many young children collect placemats from restaurants, boxes in which their toys came, and fast food bags and boxes. These items can be as important to the child as their other possessions, and they usually begin to clutter up the child's room or the whole house. Throwing them out can be traumatic for the children, so finding a way to store these items is as important as proper storage of their other possessions.

A good solution to the problem is to provide the child with a two-drawer filing cabinet, with expandable files inside. The placemats from restaurants can be placed in one folder. The fast food boxes can be folded flat and placed in another file. Boxes that contained their toys can be cut apart, with

the front taped to the back along the width, so that it opens up like a book. On the inside, the pictures of the side panels can be cut out and taped or glued, so that the child can still see all the parts of the box, but it will now fit in a file in the cabinet. That way if they want to show their friends all the scenes on the box in which the toy came, they can open their filing cabinet and pull it out.

In addition to these files, there can be a file for artwork, directions for toys, and a section for coloring books and other activity books. The possibilities are endless, and if the child participates in setting up the order in the filing cabinet, he will be able to find anything he wants, and he will be able to file new things as he gets them. Over time, the files will change as the child matures and develops new interests.

Conclusion

Young children will follow their natural tendency to maintain order if we give them a structure, which they are capable to maintain, and if we limit the number of objects for which they need to be responsible. It is not necessary for them to have three boxes of crayons out at once. Two boxes can be put away while one is used up. Most toys that come in quantity are too many for three year olds, so most of the building blocks, bristle blocks and the like can be stored while the children have access to five to ten pieces. As they need more pieces to build more involved structures, they will also have the ability to be responsible for those pieces, until eventually they will need and be able to maintain all the blocks. The same is true for vehicles and dolls. A few of these can be in the child's possession, and the rest stored for future use. As the child tires of some of the toys which are out, they can be traded for some of the toys stored away. That way the child will be able to maintain her toys and there will be new interesting things to play with when she tires of the toys available. This prevents the child from becoming overwhelmed with possessions, and allows her to use and enjoy what is available. Naturally these experiences involving order and limiting possessions will benefit the child throughout her life.





THE P.E.T. PERSPECTIVE
SWEEPING EMOTIONS
UNDER THE RUG

It is understandable that as adults we want to protect children from difficult or painful emotions—particularly because we know that there is almost always a simple solution to most of the problems they face. The trouble with this, however, is that just like sweeping dirt under the rug isn't actually cleaning, distracting children's attention from their feelings neither resolves their problems, nor does it make the feelings go away. We may temporarily calm children down when we distract them, but whatever negative thoughts or confusion inspired those feelings will remain an issue. And more often than not those negative emotions stay inside where they fester and can end up damaging their self-concept and their self-esteem. Moreover, when we try to distract or stop children from expressing negative emotions, we send a secondary message: It's not okay to talk about these feelings.

Another problem with jumping to their emotional rescue is that oftentimes, young children only express what lies at the surface of the problem. A child might say, "Thomas doesn't like me." While the child truly feels sad that Thomas doesn't seem to like her, she might also be struggling with

more troubling thoughts such as "I'm unlikable," or "I don't fit in—there's something wrong with me." By merely diverting the surface issue—say, with a comment like, "don't be silly, Thomas is your friend"—we would miss out on the opportunity to help the child identify and deal with a possible deeply felt insecurity or concern.

Helping children deal with difficult emotions like sadness, rejection, fear and frustration, rather than just trying to soothe them isn't easy because we naturally want to spare children any kind of suffering. There are also negative emotions we don't like hearing about because they upset us. I'm referring specifically to anger, aggravation, antagonism and animosity. We often try to squelch these emotions because we feel they're societally inappropriate, or because we fear that children who are allowed to express such feelings will progress to other more unacceptable behaviors.

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