



Happy 2021 to all Meher families and friends



Mrs. Muñoz

I am so happy to be here and I begin the year with high hopes and positive thoughts that we will begin to see a change and start on the path back to

normalcy. We have all been through so much this last year and I understand the toll it has taken on so many. I want to thank you for your continued support and faith in us to provide a safe and nurturing environment for your children. The children are so amazing and so resilient. Their adjustment to the new ways of doing things and finding their own way through all of this is very impressive and also gives me hope.

Our return after winter break was relatively smooth. The children were happy to be back in their normal routine and lessons and work began from day one. Being with their friends again is always the highlight of returning after a break.

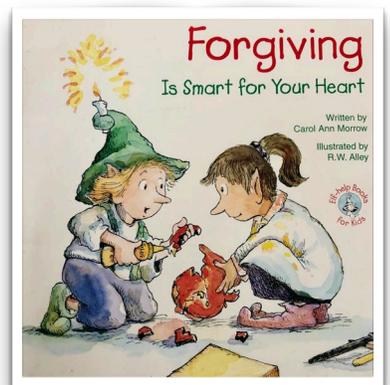
On January 20, the Elementary children all witnessed history in the making with the

inauguration of our country's new President and Vice-President. The Biden Inaugural Committee curated a livestream "Our White House: An Inaugural Celebration for Young Americans" before and during the Inaugural Ceremonies. The children watched as it was streamed live.

I would like to thank Lizette Espinoza, mother of Ezio and Anasofia in our Elementary group, for doing such an amazing job as our Fundraiser Coordinator. Even with a much lower enrollment at both schools, we raised more money than ever with an all-online fundraiser. The funds will help with the purchase of some additional outdoor play equipment, some needed classroom materials and the purchase of safety supplies that we have to purchase in large quantities to keep up with the daily guidelines for sanitation, cleaning and protection during this time of Covid. Thank you to all of the classroom parent helpers. You were a great team and I appreciate all that you did. Thank you to all that made purchases to support our fundraiser.

Stay safe everyone and I am always available for any questions or concerns.

Adela Muñoz



A Report From Mrs. Rivera

Hello everybody! December came in a flash and left as quickly as it came in! Glad and blessed to be back to school at Meher this 2021! Happy New Year to all our parents, children, administrators and to all teaching and non teaching staff! I pray too and believe that 2021 will start the eradication of the



Mrs. Rivera

pandemic slowly but surely. I hope that everybody had a wonderful and restful two weeks' winter break and is energized to come back to work this year. I know the children are all happy, healthy, delighted to learn and be challenged once again in their learning process.

In our circle time we heard great stories of their holiday celebrations; Face-timing relatives here in California and in other countries, new clothes and gifts they received. We noticed too that the children grew! Both our parents and children were all

smiles as they signed in.

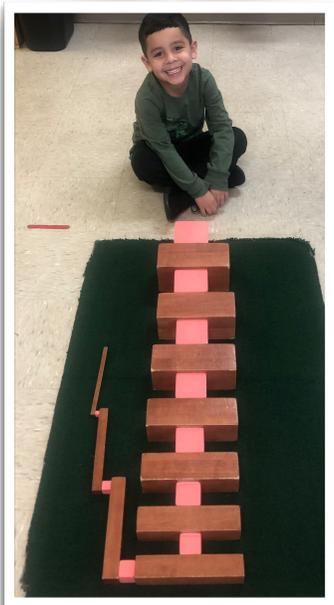
We have a new student, Mahalia Ayala, who is 2.8 years old. She is a sweet girl and very much ready to go to school! On her first day, she gave her parents a hug and a kiss and said for them to come back later to pick her up! She had a wonderful start and has mingled with our children happily.

We had a long weekend this month, the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday! Before this day, in one of our circle times I read a book to our children about Dr. King's life, suffering

and dream. On one occasion, at a young age he was treated badly in school; the children felt what he felt and gave out different views what that would be. For his commemoration the children colored cut-out pictures of him and pasted them on a cut-out shirt.

Older children in our class are starting to read and write two and three letter words in cursive. Most are enjoying the skip counting of the short and long chains, and writing them correctly on the long grid paper. They have started to work on addition games and charts. Our younger children love to write numbers from 1-20 now in the grid papers and have expanded their phonics sounds. Most of our younger children are able to write their names in cursive too!

This month, we will be talking and singing more about the winter season and things related to it, like the clothes we wear and the weather and animals that hibernate during this time of year. We were all happy to have experienced the life cycle of a monarch butterfly! From eggs, caterpillar, cocoon and finally a beautiful monarch butterfly! I took



pictures and it will be displayed on our classroom board.

We have one birthday celebrant for this month; Katalina Patrick turned 4 years old the 16th of this month. Happy birthday Katalina!

Thanks as always to Ms. Martinez and Ms. Mills for their continued assistance, guidance, love and passion to all our children. They always see to it that our classroom is set for the next day classroom activities. They always work as a team with one another and with me. Thank you so much!

One of the core beliefs in Montessori education is that of **Human Tendencies**. This is defined as the natural impulses or drives that direct an individual to perform certain actions or activities without a conscious plan, providing him with individual satisfaction. It is a universal drive that is present in varying ways and strengths in different individuals. Work is one of the human tendencies that Montessori is

identified with. Young children have this urge to touch things they see and manipulate them with their hands. They would like to do this again and again until they perfect the work. An example of this is climbing on steps. This love

of repetition allows them to master a certain task or skill. A child loves consistency, sameness and exactness. This rhythm and regularity has helped man for many generations as he did his work in the field, went home, ate, slept and wakes up again the next day to do it all over again.



As we begin this New Year may we all get back into the rhythm and flow as little children do. All the best and a great year ahead!

Mrs. Rivera, Ms. Mills and Ms. Martinez



Ms. Lopez

A Report From Ms. Lopez

Happy New Year parents! I hope this year is filled with lots of health, success and happiness for you all. When we resumed classes on January 4th, the children

were so excited to get busy with activities they've had lessons on, see their friends, and share what they did over the winter break. On January 8, we had our Christmas celebration. The children brought a gift to exchange with a friend in the classroom. They were all so thrilled about their new present.

We welcomed a new student this month, Zoey Yu. She is 2.6 years old. She is very enthusiastic, eager, and excited to be in our class. The children have helped guide her through our environment and remind her of our classroom rules. She is receiving lots of grace and courtesy lessons. Also, we celebrated Aston Pan's birthday. He is one of our three graduates this year. He turned six on



the 21st. Welcome Zoey and Happy Birthday Aston!

This month we had a pleasant surprise in our garden. There were many caterpillars that the children discovered. They watched them daily eat the leaves, turn into cocoons, to finally become butterflies. The children observed them and were so excited to see the different



stages butterflies go through. The butterflies fly low when they first come out of their cocoons so the children always get so happy seeing them fly at their height level.

This month, we have a few popular activities the children enjoy. The stamp game is a material in our math area done by our graduates. Its purpose is to show the children how to add, subtract, multiply, and divide by the thousands. The children have a visual representation of the numbers. They are able to see how each operation works, why exchanges happen when we reach 10 stamps in a category, and learn a lot of mathematical language such as equal sign, minuend, sum, difference, dividend, and additive to name a few.

The children are also enjoying the sandpaper letters which is in our language area. The child learns the sound of each letter in cursive, and then learns to write that letter in cursive as well. The children have been independently creating groups of 3 children, they pick a sandpaper letter and try to name things that start with that sound. Once they've named a few things, they pick a new sandpaper letter and do the same.

Mrs. Suh and I continuously strive to have a normalized classroom; I give lessons to the children and she reinforces those lessons. The children have been doing so wonderfully and keeping busy. Little by little and day by day the work period becomes quieter and productive. We are so happy and proud of all of their hard work.



Parents, please don't hesitate to email me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you all for your continuous trust in us to care for your child's education.

Ms. Lopez and Mrs. Suh

A Report From Mr. Mindes



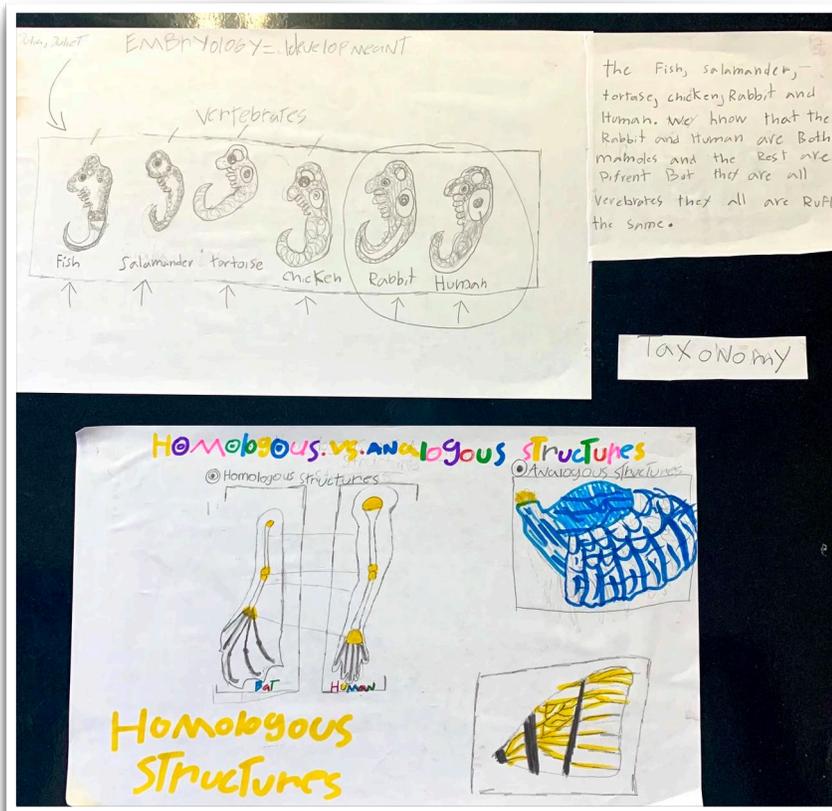
Mr. Mindes

Meher Families!
Happy New Year! I hope everyone was able to relax over break and feel renewed. The advantage of coming back to school - at least for an Elementary teacher - is seeing the students greet each other (along with the

faculty and staff) with an abundance of energy and enthusiasm ... it's not a bad way to start your day!

Taxonomy - the classification of life

In a little more than a week after our return, our older Elementary students



started to study taxonomy - the classification of all living organisms. They first learned about Carolus Linnaeus classification system - one of the earliest, and most popular classification systems; in fact, many consider Linnaeus the father of modern taxonomy. Later, students learned concepts associated with modern taxonomy, such as “homologous”, “analogous”, and “phylogeny”, ideas that highlight modern taxonomy’s greater emphasis on evolutionary biology. The students’ familiarity, natural love, and curiosity for and about animals keeps them engaged

Other Lessons

Taxonomy wasn’t the only new concept this month; here is a partial list of some lessons continued (in a bid to master), or new ones introduced to students: dynamic addition with multi-digit addends; measuring and identifying angles, such as right

angles, straight angles, acute angles, and obtuse angles; identifying the parts of speech - noun, adjective, verb, preposition, adverb, etc.; abstract division; suffixes and word parts; and finally, a brief introduction to understanding the seasons. We’ve included a few photos of students working on these activities and/or, in some cases their work.

Improvisation classes

Mario, Alejandra’s father, gave a virtual improvisation/acting class to Meher’s Elementary students. Mario is the Program Manager at The Unusual Suspects Theater Company, which runs theater programs for youth all over California. His first class included a number of

entertaining and simple listening and movement “drills”. The almost constant laughter and excited voices heard throughout the session expressed what fun the students had!

Woodworking



Before the rain and the cold weather, a number of students showed a great deal of enthusiasm for woodworking. The latest project “craze” was making a bird feeder. Once the rain clears up and the weather warms, the hammers and saws will be back out!

From Ms. Wildhaber, Director of our Altadena Campus School News

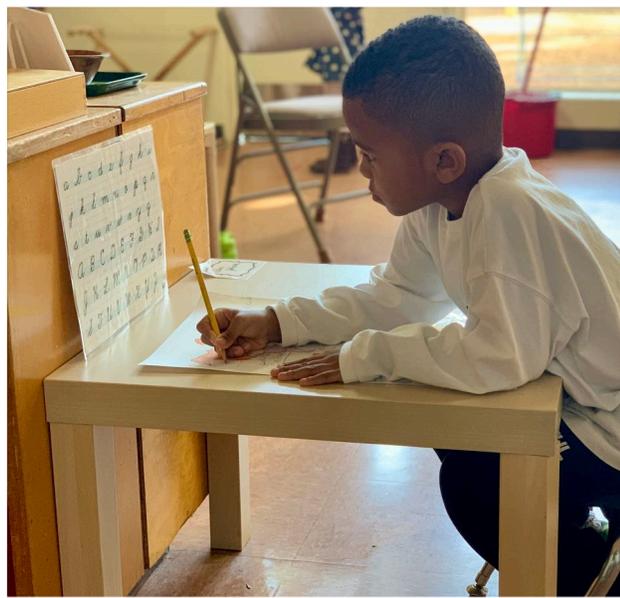


New Staff

I am very happy to announce that Mrs. Fagundo, formerly Miss Kulwicki, has joined our staff on a regular basis for the next few months. Mrs. Fagundo is a long time

Mrs. Wildhaber Meher Montessori employee who has primarily worked out of our Monterey Park campus. However, she has filled in for us on several occasions over the years, most notably during the summers Miss Tinajero was away for her AMI Montessori training.

The addition of Mrs. Fagundo will mean that Miss Tinajero and I each have a dedicated assistant in our classroom for a



portion of the day. This is something that neither of us has had since our summer session last year. As our numbers have increased in the classroom, so have our daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures, as well as material making. Having an assistant in the classroom will make it easier to assist the children with hand-washing and

toileting, cleaning all materials that have been used for the day, and cutting/tracing/stapling consumable classroom materials.

Mrs. Fagundo will be Miss Tinajero's classroom assistant and Miss McCray will be mine.

Packing Lunches

As the weather is now colder, we are seeing more children come to school with warm lunches. Please keep in mind that containers will tighten up as the hot food cools. This can make it very difficult, sometimes even impossible, for the staff to help your child unscrew thermoses, or pull the lids off of airtight containers. It is best if you let your child's food cool significantly before sealing it up and packing it in their lunch bags.

Checking In/Signing Out

Now that rainy season is upon us, please allow for extra time when dropping off your children or picking them up. One of the things Childcare Licensing asks is that centers continue to do check in and pick ups outside the building with social distancing in place. We are going to try and continue to adhere to those guidelines even during the rainy weather. The safety of all our Meher families is our #1 priority. And if that means getting a little wet during temperature checks and screening questions, I consider that a small price to pay. If you would like to speed up the pick up process during rainy day, feel free to call when you're close, and we'll try to have your child cleaned up and ready by the time you arrive.

Mrs. Wildhaber's Classroom

Welcome 2021!

While this year's holiday celebration was likely very different from previous years, I hope everyone was able to enjoy their time together. I promised my children I would play one board game with them every day during break, and they held me to it. The games ranged from Gin to Sorry!, to Twister, to Grounded for Life, to Hogwarts Battle,



and the list goes on! It was fun connecting as a family and watching my sons strategize and work together to team up against my husband and myself.

In the classroom, we started 2021 with two new kiddos. Elise Kondo (she goes by Ellie), Kirsten's 2-year-old sister, and 4-year-old Sophia Yan, joined our classroom on January 4th. At this time, my classroom is completely full for the year, per the new guidelines. It has been very exciting to have new kiddos in the classroom for both myself and the other classmates. The returning students have been nothing but kind, patient and helpful with settling our new friends in.

Another exciting thing that happened is that Miss McCray is now an all-day assistant in our classroom. With the fuller class size, and addition of new students, it has been extremely helpful having her in the classroom once again. I did not realize how much I was doing every day, in every capacity, until I had her back in the room.

The children are moving along in their maths lessons, progressing in their reading, and refining their practical life skills daily. More and more children are adding and subtracting with a variety of materials. I even

have one child working on multiplication, with more soon to follow. My readers are devouring the leveled reading books so voraciously that I had to rotate in several new books to keep their reading fresh.

There seems to be an unspoken understanding in the classroom that water work is reserved for the afternoons only. I kind of love how the class has come up with this on their own. I also love how the kiddos seem to find this work relaxing and save it for the afternoon work period, when they may be feeling a little tired, and want to slow down a bit. The beauty of this is that since they are slowing down, they are very thorough with their cycle of activity. Paintings are very detailed and methodically done. Plants are carefully selected based on which ones have brown leaves, dry soil, or are in general need of a trim. And tables get a vigorous scrubbing when washed. On most days, this leads to a collective afternoon vibe of peace.

Coming in February

We cover Black History Month, Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year, and President's Day in February.

Children are welcome to bring valentines to pass out to their classmates. Please leave

the “to” section blank. Help your child fill out their name in the “from” section only. Also, any food must come individually packaged. We have 12 children in class.

Until Next Month,
Mrs. Wildhaber
& Miss McCray

A Report From Ms. Tinajero



Ms. Tinajero

December was such an exciting month! Our classroom was able to have a real Christmas tree, and the children were able to make ornaments to hang on the tree. We

had arts and crafts every week, which the children enjoyed very much. Mrs. Wildhaber and I came up with the idea to do a picture exchange with the children in both classes. The children were able to draw or write something nice to a student in the other classroom, and they were very excited to be able to draw something for their friends. The children participated 100% in last month’s School Shirt Day so to reward them we made a fingerprint wreath ornament.

I had parent/teacher conferences the first full week of December; I felt they went very well.

We celebrated our first student birthday of the year. Our friend Lou turned the big 4 - yeah! Some of her friends in the classroom brought her some really sweet gifts.

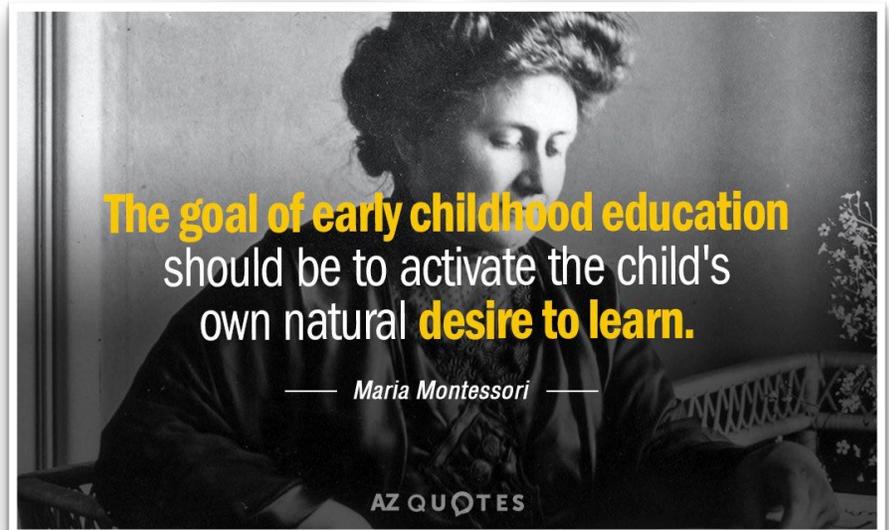
We focused a lot on refining what the children already knew and reviewed lessons so that when they went on their holiday vacation they retained what they had previously learned. We had a surprise video made for the parents where the children sang some songs they had practiced every day in December,



and they were so excited to show their parents.

Overall the short month was filled with arts and crafts, songs about snowflakes and snowmen and laughter from the children. Thank you to the families who continue to believe in our ability to keep your children safe at Meher. I’m one lucky teacher to have such great students and parents. With our wishes for a great New Year!

Ms. Tinajero
Mrs. Fagundo





Charleston FundRaiser

The Meher fall fundraiser came to a close and it was amazing to see how our community came together! Between the Monterey Park and Altadena campuses, we raised a total of \$17,199.50 in total sales; a school record! As we moved through the difficult year, the parents that supported the fundraiser efforts, recognized how blessed our children were to physically be at school. We believe that this gratefulness pushed everyone to do better in helping our schools. With the teamwork between staff, parents, and students, we even surpassed Charleston's own metrics.

- Meher had 124% online registration participation rate (Top earners 31%, Avg. 20%)
- 64.5% Participants who sent an email (Top earners 54%, Avg. 48%)
- 5.8 Ave. # of emails sent/registered participant (Top earners 5.5, Avg. 4.6)
- 88.7% of registered participants w/ a sale. (Top earners 74%, Avg. 51%)

We could not have done this without the leadership support from parent volunteers that helped reach out to the parents in their respective classrooms! A very special thank you goes out to Maria Patrick (Mrs. Rivera's class); Marta Canosa Ortega (Miss Lopez's class); Marilyn Diaz, Lizette Espinosa Veneziano, and Giuseppe Veneziano (Mr. Mindes' class); Allison Diaz (Mrs. Wildhaber's class); and Allison Linamen (Miss Tinajero's class). This dedicated group of parents had a group text where they communicated daily and cheered each other on to reach daily milestones throughout the fundraising weeks! In particular they shared that it was nice

reaching out to the parent's in their classroom to touch base, introduce themselves to new parents, and find out how everyone was doing. They said it was the best part of the fundraiser- connecting with each other!

A special recognition also goes out to the top sellers in number of items sold for each classroom: Way to go Champs!

- Mrs. Rivera's: Katalina Patrick (21), Jemma Huang (16)
- Miss Lopez: Santi Ortega (83), Maxwell Lahoda (59); Nina Ortega (17)
- Mr. Mindes: Anasofia Veneziano (102); Ezio Veneziano (87); Henry Lahoda (56); Cylis Garcia (30); Juliet Diaz (26)
- Mrs. Wildhaber: Clayton Diaz (22); Milo (13) and a special reward to Mrs. Wildhaber herself for 30 units!
- Miss Tinajero: Isabel Long (19); Lou Shoenbam (13)
- TOP FAMILY SELLERS: (Can we just say Wow!)
 - ANASOFIA and EZIO VENEZIANO 189 UNITS!!
 - MAXWELL and HENRY LAHODA 105 UNITS!!
 - SANTI and NINA ORTEGA 100 UNITS!!

As you can imagine, the school has been financially affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic, and this additional boost will support Meher in making sure our children continue to excel and succeed in their education. We want to thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for your contributions!

Thank you!

Lizette Espinosa
Meher Fundraiser Coordinator

Still Disinfecting Surfaces? It Might Not Be Worth It

*National Public Radio December 28, 2020
by Patti Neighmond*

At the start of the pandemic, stores quickly sold out of disinfectant sprays and wipes. People were advised to wipe down their packages and the cans they bought at the grocery store.

But scientists have [learned a lot this year](#) about the coronavirus and how it's transmitted, and it turns out all that scrubbing and disinfecting might not be necessary.

If a person infected with the coronavirus sneezes, coughs or talks loudly, droplets containing particles of the virus can travel through the air and eventually land on nearby surfaces. But the risk of [getting infected from touching a surface contaminated by the virus is low](#), says [Emanuel Goldman](#), a microbiologist at Rutgers University.

"In hospitals, surfaces have been tested near COVID-19 patients, and no infectious virus can be identified," Goldman says.

What's found is [viral RNA](#), which is like "the corpse of the virus," he says. That's what's left over after the virus dies.

"They don't find infectious virus, and that's because the virus is very fragile in the

environment — it decays very quickly," Goldman says.

Back in January and February, scientists and public health officials thought surface contamination was a problem. In fact, [early studies suggested](#) the virus could live on surfaces for days.

It was assumed transmission occurred when an infected person sneezed or coughed on a nearby surface and "you would get the disease by touching those surfaces and then transferring the virus into your eyes, nose or mouth," says [Linsey Marr](#), an engineering professor at Virginia Tech who studies airborne transmission of infectious disease.

So people were advised to clean common areas with disinfectant, wipe down cans and boxes from the grocery store and even wear gloves.

In retrospect, Marr says that was "overkill." Today, she says, "all the evidence

points toward breathing in the virus from the air as being the most important route of transmission." Scientists now know that the early surface studies were done in pristine lab conditions using much larger amounts of virus than would be found in a real-life scenario. Even so, many of us continue to attack door handles, packages and groceries with disinfectant wipes, and

workers across the U.S. spend hours disinfecting surfaces in public areas like [airports, buildings and subways](#).

There's no scientific data to justify this, says [Dr. Kevin Fennelly](#), a respiratory infection specialist with the National Institutes of Health.

But the risk of [getting infected from touching a surface contaminated by the virus is low](#), says [Emanuel Goldman](#), a microbiologist at Rutgers University.

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What's found is [viral RNA](#), which is like "the corpse of the virus," he says. That's what's left over after the virus dies.

"They don't find infectious virus, and that's because the virus is very fragile in the environment — it decays very quickly," Goldman says.

"When you see people doing spray disinfection of streets and sidewalks and walls and subways, I just don't know of any data that supports the fact that we're getting infected from viruses that are jumping up from the sidewalk."

Marr says focusing on cleaning surfaces is not the best way to slow infection.

"Instead of paying so much attention to cleaning surfaces, we might be better off paying attention to cleaning the air, given the finite amount of time and resources," Marr says.

Fennelly agrees, noting that airborne transmission is more likely in indoor public places like restaurants.

"Why aren't we doing more to figure out ways to ventilate those areas?" he asks. "It would be better to use [ultraviolet](#)

[germicidal irradiation](#), which we know can kill these viruses in the air."

Figuring out how to prevent coronavirus transmission in office buildings, schools, bars and restaurants is definitely a challenge, he says, but "we have a lot of really smart engineers and architects and industrial hygienists who know how to handle airborne infection."

Spraying disinfectant is not only unproductive, but it's potentially dangerous, according to [Delphine Farmer](#), an atmospheric chemist at Colorado State University.

Heavy use of disinfectants, like bleach and hydrogen peroxide, can "produce toxic molecules that then we breathe," she warns.

And breathing in [toxic particles can affect our health](#), Farmer says. The molecules can react directly with the cells in lung tissue and cause [oxidative stress](#). And certain molecules are known to be toxic. "It's like breathing in poison," she says.

Early on in the pandemic, Farmer says, many people were making cleaning

mistakes: "There were a lot of cases of people cleaning their groceries with bleach and vinegar, which is a recipe to create some very nasty chlorine gas, and [people were getting quite ill](#) from those side effects."

Bottom line: Health experts emphasize that the most important way to avoid infection is to stay away from crowds and wear a mask whenever you leave the house. Limit the time you spend in any indoor space with people outside of your own household — and wear a mask when you're in those spaces.

When you're out in public, be aware of surfaces you touch, and wash your hands often. It's much more effective to wash your hands thoroughly than try to clean everything you touch.

And if you do decide to

keep wiping down canned goods or packages that arrive at your house, there's no need for fancy cleaning products; "old-fashioned soap and water" will do just fine, Farmer says.

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Dr. Maria Montessori

Covid-19 Spread Appears Limited in Schools When Precautions Followed, CDC Says

By Brianna Abbott, January 26, 2021, Wall Street Journal

The [spread of Covid-19](#) appears to be limited within schools when masking and other safety precautions are implemented, [according to a report](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released on Tuesday.

Health officials looked at Covid-19 transmission in K-12 schools in Wood County, Wis., which suggested that “schools might be able to safely open with appropriate mitigation efforts in place,” according to the CDC report summary.

The schools had a number of mitigation measures in place, the report said, including an estimated masking compliance of more than 92% among students. Class sizes ranged from 11 to 20 students, and different cohorts of students rarely interacted. Staff members were told to wear masks and keep 6 feet away from others.

Among the 5,530 students and staff members across 17 schools, a total of 191 Covid-19 cases were reported from Aug. 31 through Nov. 29. Based on individual case investigations, only seven cases, or 3.7%, were attributed to in-school transmission, all of which were students.

Meanwhile, between 7% and 40% of tests in the surrounding communities were coming back positive.

“Attending school where recommended mitigation strategies are implemented might not place children in a higher risk environment than exists in the community,” the report said. “In-person schooling for children has numerous health and societal benefits, especially for children and parents of lower socioeconomic status.”

The CDC had encouraged U.S. schools to [reopen for in-person learning](#) as early as July, though there was concern that they did so under political pressure. More recently, studies have increasingly suggested that viral transmission in K-12 schools is relatively low when mitigation measures are followed, while school closures have had a detrimental effect on students.

As the debate has continued in the U.S., more [schools are closing in European countries](#), where a more contagious variant

has accelerated spread and as some studies and outbreaks there show that schoolchildren, even younger ones, can play a significant role in spreading infections.

On Jan. 21, as a part of the new administration’s pandemic response, President Biden signed an executive order to support the safe reopening and operation of schools.

Three researchers at the CDC also published an [editorial in the Journal of the American Medical Association](#) on Tuesday, saying there is growing data showing there is “a path forward” to return to full in-person instruction for schools, if communities take steps to reduce transmission and limit other activities such as indoor sports practice.

The editorial called for universal face mask use in schools and improving ventilation and screening testing, among other measures. Staff and students should continue to have online options, especially

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for those at an increased risk of severe illness or death from Covid-19, the editorial said.

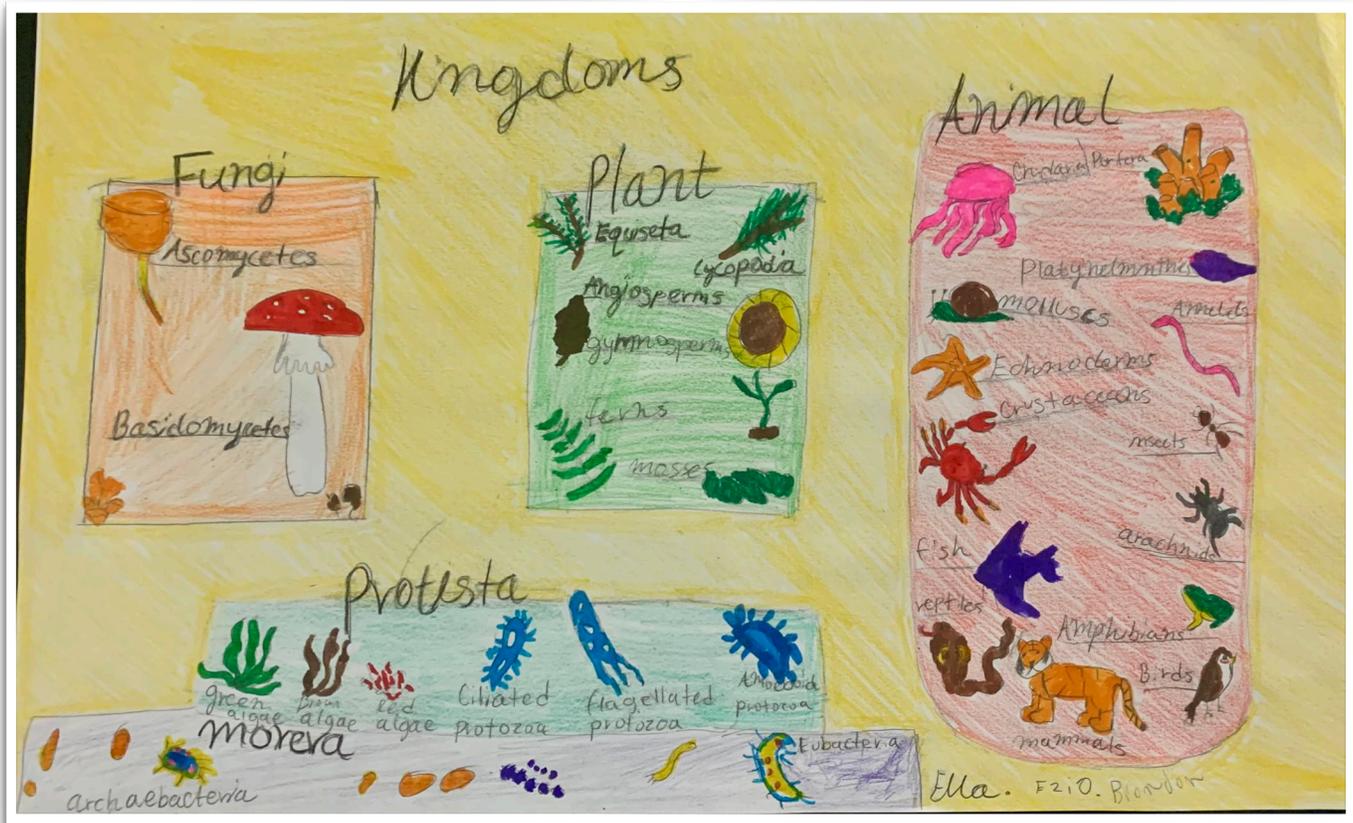
“Ultimately the decision whether a particular school opens or stays open is up to the school and local community,” a CDC spokesman said in a statement. “Kids need to be and should be in school for many reasons provided schools can strictly adhere to recommended guidelines to prevent transmission in school settings.”

A second report published by the CDC on Tuesday found that the virus spread during two high-school wrestling tournaments in Florida in early December. Following the tournaments, at least 38 attendees, or roughly 30%, ended up testing positive for the virus, and the virus spread to 41 close contacts. One contact, an adult over 50 years old, died. All winter indoor and outdoor high-school athletics in the county were suspended.

Physical distancing isn't feasible for sports such as wrestling, the report noted, and the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended against wearing masks during wrestling because of the choking hazard.

“High-contact school athletic activities for which mask wearing and physical distancing are not possible should be postponed during periods with substantial or high levels of SARS-CoV-2 community transmission,” the report said.

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More Taxonomy work from Mr. Mindes's children