

MEHER MONTESSORI SCHOOL

JANUARY/FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Meher Montessori School is the Oldest AMI Accredited Montessori School in Southern California!

By Director Adela Muñoz

The first two months of 2022 are quickly flying by. So much good work has been happening in all of the classrooms since our return from winter break. We also have had new students join our communities, Lunar New Year celebrations, Valentine's Day fun and lessons about historical figures that made a difference and changed our country, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Abraham Lincoln. One of the pillars of the Montessori educational approach known as "Cosmic Education" for children 6-12 years old is the study of how the past has shaped our current existence.

One of the things about Meher Montessori Schools that makes us stand out above the rest is our long history as an AMI accredited Montessori School. Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) was founded in 1929 by Dr. Montessori and her son, Mario, to protect the integrity of her life's work. And, as stated in the AMI/USA website, fifty years ago, a group of visionaries in the United States came together to support a radical idea - that children, if given the right Montessori nurturing, could lead humanity toward a more peaceful future. With the support of many, AMI/USA was founded in 1972. With that support, they have grown to become a trusted resource for Montessorians and schools around the country.

Another visionary that same year was Founder and Executive Director John F. Page. He started a small Montessori school in Altadena and built a community/children's house, with the application of Montessori principles as the main goal. Our Schools continue to this day, even with the challenges of the last couple of years, meeting the needs of the children and providing them with a full, rich and meaningful learning environment based on the science-based Montessori pedagogy continues.

This month and next month, our official AMI accreditation will take place. An official AMI Elementary consultant will meet with our Elementary teacher and me as part of the process. An official AMI Primary consultant will meet with the Primary teachers individually and me as well. This is an every 2-3 year process in order to continue to be an accredited AMI Montessori School.



I invite you to visit the [AMI/USA website](#). There is a lot of interesting information for our parents to learn more about Montessori and what makes your child's school different.

Thank you and peace to you all.

**Friday,
February
25th**

SCHOOL SHIRT DAY

**Sunday,
March
13th**

**DAYLIGHT SAVING
TIME BEGINS**

**Monday,
March
21st**

**RE-ENROLLMENT
FORMS GO HOME**

Mrs. Rivera's Class

Hello parents,

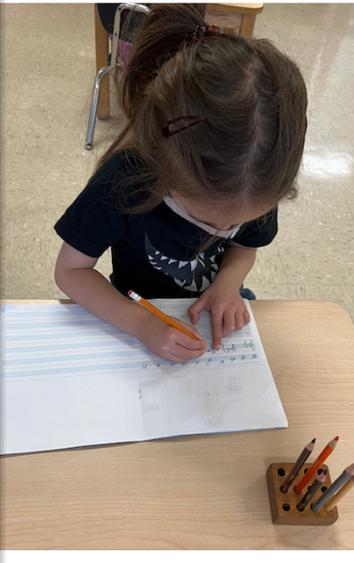
Happy New Year/Maligayang Bagong Taon to us all! Wishing you all the best this new year has to give; more love, happiness, peace and good health to us all as always! We all enjoyed our Winter Break and rested well, giving us energy to be back to work once again. Our newsletter is once again here to inform you of all the activities and lessons the children are learning and their progression in in the classroom. First of all I'd like to thank all of our parents for their generosity and love in giving us wonderful gifts that my assistants and I received in December; we all appreciate it very much.

Two important events happened in the month of January; Martin Luther King, Jr. (National Holiday) and Lunar New Year. We discussed the importance of these holidays and the children had a better understanding of why we celebrate them. We read about the life and achievements of Dr. King and his famous quote "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

There was a class celebration for the Lunar New Year. A few of the children wore beautiful traditional clothing in honor of the new year. The children were very excited to share their outfits and took great care throughout the day not to stain or rip their clothes. The class wore a tiger band on their head and held their tiger stand as they paraded onto the asphalt area before lunch! Food was plenty, delicious and very filling; children came back for seconds and thirds. As they ate we sang the song "Kong Hai Fat Choy!" We would like to thank Kiana Huang and Ms. Mills for distributing "red envelopes" to the children.

We had another 100% School Shirt Day last January! Thank you parents for your support and may we continue this teamwork for the four months remaining this school year. February is said to be the month of love. Love for each other and our world. Two great presidents of the United States were recognized and honored; President Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. Both served two terms in office in their time and are memorialized in the present by statues, U.S. currency, and Mount Rushmore. The children enjoyed learning about these presidents. We also had some wonderful treats and the children shared Valentine's gifts with their classmates.

The children are always busy in class learning at their own pace. Every day they improve and better understand the lessons taught them. I love having a full class in attendance. Please continue with the good attendance as it makes such a difference in a Montessori classroom when the whole community can be together. Older children and graduating ones are busy with the language and math areas. Sentence pattern and Functions of Words are their field of concentration in language and multiplying and currency are in math. It is important that the child not only realizes the exact meaning of the word, but also the position of the word in a phrase or a sentence. Symbols are placed over a word to make it clear to the child the proper function of the word in the sentence. All of these are keys for further exploration by the children's minds w h e n expressed in



writing. When the child understands the meaning of the words, he can then interpret what he reads and it helps him in total reading when he becomes conscious of the thoughts and feelings expressed. Good sentences are used to help him be in contact with good literature. Reading analysis, on the other hand, is a key for further explorations which are expressed in writing. The purpose of this analysis is not for grammar, but is essential for reading. These tools help the child to read and not to memorize; I ask the child to read and act the written command. In that way I'll know if the child has really understood.

Thank you to my two great and compassionate assistants: Ms. Mills and Ms. Ramirez. They help me so very much in promoting discipline, cooperation, respect and love for work and one another. A follow thru from both to the children is very important. Thank you to all our dear parents for your continued support for our school and class as a whole. We are all moving at the same pace for the love, happiness and good learning process of our children; thank you too for your continued trust in us.

With all our love and gratitude

Mrs. Rivera

Ms. Lopez' Class

Hello parents!

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. The children have been receiving lots of lessons and working hard.



The metal insets are part of the language area. They are a tool used to prepare the children for writing. Working with the metal insets teaches children to develop their pencil grip, refine their fine motor skills, and learn how to draw within an outline, which is the material's control of error. In their work, the children's ability to create straight and fluid lines are refined. This

lesson is first given at the age of 3, and children are encouraged to continue working on it throughout their primary years. As they get older, their designs become more intricate, allowing the child to express themselves artistically.

Maria Montessori said, "In this way...children perfect themselves in writing without actually writing."

The older children have worked hard with their metal insets, which shows in their writing. They've been given journals to write in, and one of their goals is to write in between the lines. It's lovely to see the children have such beautiful and legible cursive writing. They challenge themselves daily by spelling out words with the moveable alphabet or reading a list of words and memorizing them and then writing those words in their journals.



I look forward to you all seeing your child's metal inset and writing work, and how they are progressing with more and more practice.

The month of February has been eventful. We celebrated the Lunar New Year with a huge feast and desserts. A traditional Lunar New Year custom is to de-clutter and clean



your environment. That's what we did the day prior. All the children helped sweep, dust, mop, and organize the classroom. It was a team effort, and they all enjoyed being a part of it.

We've also been learning about Black History Month. We've been reading books, hearing music, and discovering art from all eras. The children have been asking great questions at circle time which have led to great discussions.



Thank you all,
Ms. López

Mr. Mindes' Class

Hello Meher Families!

I regularly reread the writings of Maria Montessori. Specifically, in the last two months, I revisited what I see as, at least in part, the foundation of Montessori's educational theory. I am referring to the human tendencies, which Mario Montessori (Montessori's son) enumerated in his book, *The Human Tendencies and Montessori Education*. On the Maria Montessori Institute's website (an AMI affiliate in London) they print a list of the human tendencies (orientation, imagination, work/activity, etc.) along with a description of a *human tendency* (following):

- They are fundamental and unchanging.
- They are present from the beginning of life and human history.
- They are what we in the present day have in common with our ancestors.
- They are common to all societies and social strata.
- They are determiners of human behavior.
- They are the prime manifestation of our humanity.
- They facilitate humans in adaptation and the creation of a way of life.
- They are useful as a guide in studying human behavior.

- They give direction to human beings, ensuring the satisfaction of their needs.
- They are always active throughout life.
- They manifest themselves differently in the different planes of development
- They function as "verbs", imperatives which drive humans to act upon their environment.

(See: <https://www.mariamontessori.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Human-Needs-and-Tendencies.pdf>)

I bring up the human tendencies because Ms. Munoz and I have been discussing over the last several weeks the idea of a regular weekly hike, an expedition really. And, as Montessori writes in *From Childhood to Adolescence*, "We must not be content to consider the children's outing as a simple health-giving exercise." With that in mind, we see these hikes as an opportunity to help manifest some human tendencies. Our first expedition will focus on "rock hounding" - searching for and collecting rocks, fossils and minerals. This coincides with the many month(s) of long intense student interest on this topic. As an aside, parents, please think about taking out your hiking boots, archeological tools, or field guides because we will need volunteers to help with transportation.

Academic Notes

I looked over my records this month of new lessons presented and older concepts practiced or further explored and I am somewhat amazed at all the activity that went on. The following is a partial list of work pursued: long multiplication and division; converting fractions to decimals and decimals to percents; multiplying fractions; adding and subtracting fractions; converting improper fractions to mixed numbers. Additionally, students investigated factors ("makers of numbers"), added and subtracted large numbers, or continued to practice single digit addition and subtraction.

In geometry, many students measured angles with a protractor, reviewed angle nomenclature, identified and drew 3-dimensional shapes, and reviewed the concepts of congruency, similarity, and equivalence.

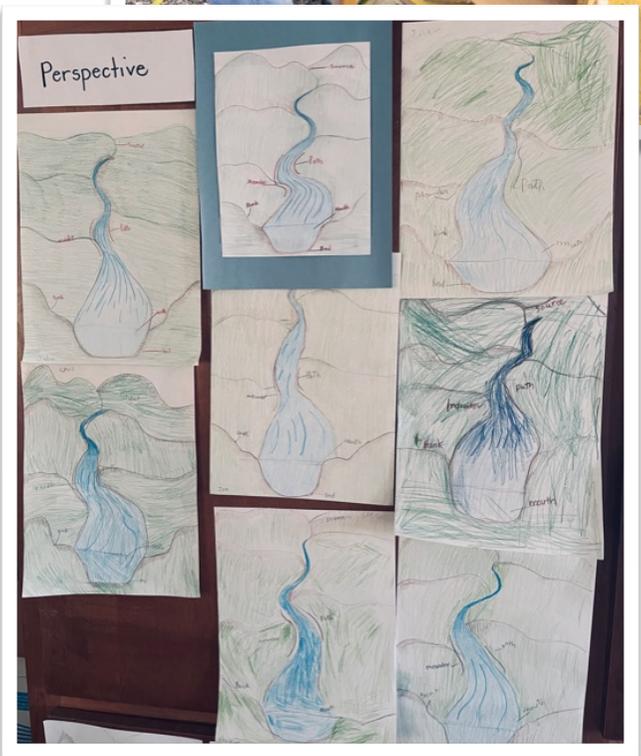
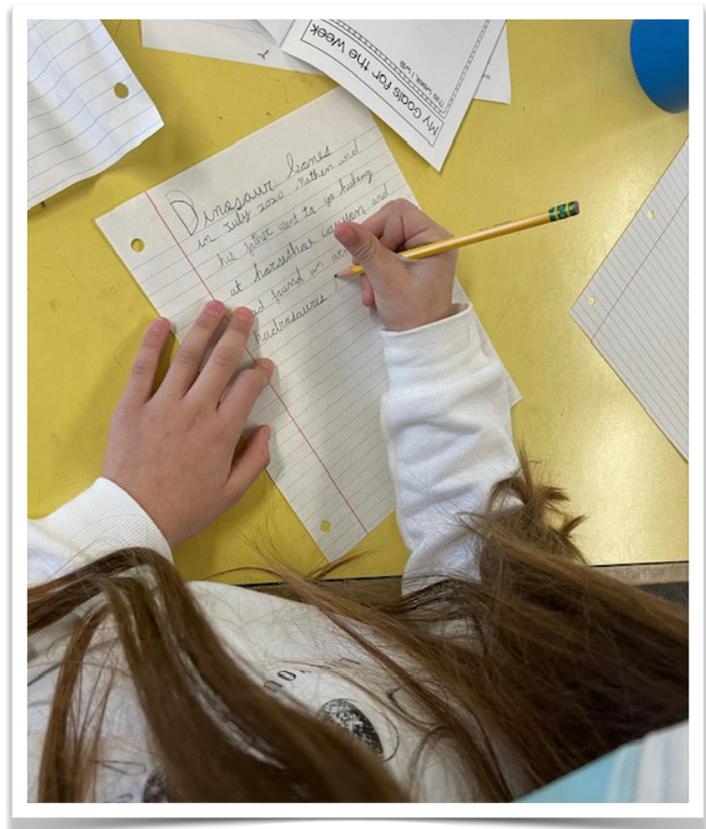
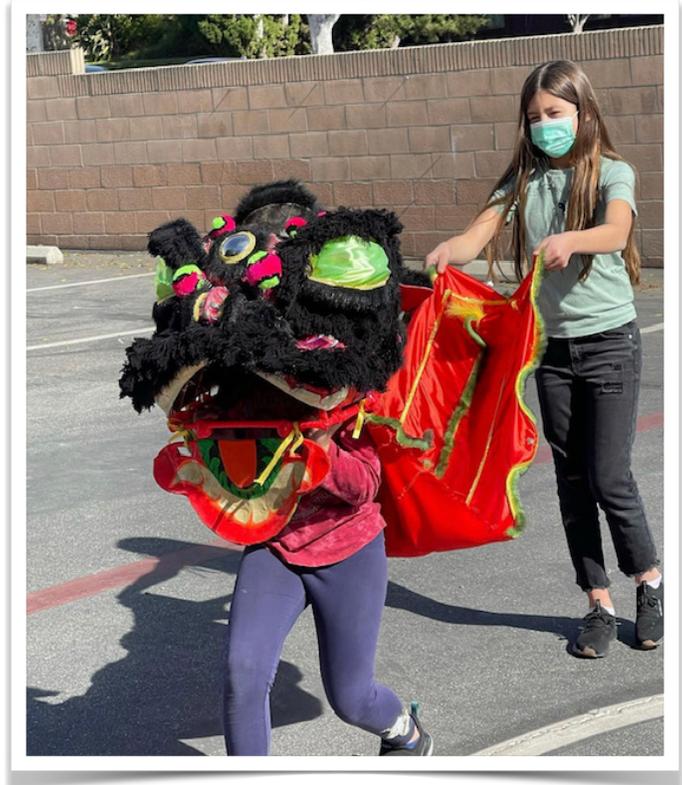
In language, besides the on-going work of reading fluency and identifying the various parts of speech, students explored root words and suffixes, sentence concepts such



as subject, predicate, direct object, and indirect object, and summary writing. I am very excited about summary writing because it aids reading comprehension thereby giving students a greater independence in their pursuit of knowledge.

Finally, geography and history lessons on land and water forms, the work of rivers, and the composition of the earth were presented. Also, informally, the timeline of life and geologic time were discussed.

Until next month,
Len Mindes



Altadena News

With re-enrollment just around the corner, this is an excellent time to ask your child's teacher what to expect for the third year/graduate year. There are so many benefits to a child in completing the full Montessori program at the Primary level. Developing leadership skills in the classroom, diving deeper into materials, and moving to the abstract, as well as a sense of completion in your child, are just a few.

Many families who have chosen not to re-enroll for the child's graduate year have reached out to share their disappointment over the quality of education their kindergartener is receiving at their new school. This is then followed up with the families' asking for ideas on how to supplement their child's education at home, so their child does not lose the momentum or love of learning they were getting in Montessori.

Mrs. Wildhaber's Class

Practical Life can be described as simple, ordinary daily activities to embellish, maintain, and restore proper conditions in our environment and establish and maintain social relations with ourselves, our families, and other people. Practical Life activities provide a motive and urge in the child to organize movements. With the general purpose of integrating the human personality: the mind, body, and spirit, through meaningful work, is it any surprise that it is considered the heart of any Montessori classroom?

While many of the two and three-year-olds are firmly in Practical Life and Sensorial materials, there is a confidence

emanating from them that was not there at the start of the school year. It is no longer the graduates and four-year-olds helping with securing outerwear. The more confident three-year-olds are jumping at the chance to show off their skills and offer aid to the two-year-olds. As their confidence in their abilities grows, so does their urge to help classmates and demonstrate their mastery of skills.

A strong foundation in Practical Life translates throughout the rest of the classroom. Following a logical sequence of events in multistep activities, like care of plants or hand washing, develops a mathematical mind. The refined pincer grip that comes with pouring and tweezing activities aids in metal inset and handwriting work. Refined control and coordination that come from carrying a tray with breakable objects, is on full display when handling the large geography maps.

As the graduates continue to receive advanced lessons in the function of words, parts of speech, multiplication and division, as well as supplemental lessons that I plan specifically for them, I am reminded of how far they have come in their three+ years in my classroom. Much like the pyramids, a solid foundation is necessary before building up. In the Montessori classroom, Practical Life is not only the heart; it is also the foundation.

Until Next Month,

Mrs. Wildhaber,



Ms. Tinajero's Class

As the day begins and the children come into the classroom, they put their water bottles and lunch bags on the lunch truck. The children already know that they wash their hands before touching the classroom materials. On Mondays the children get together as a community to put freshly washed materials back to their appropriate areas this includes rugs, drying cloths, aprons, and our cleaning rags. As they finish putting the laundry away the children take their chosen work out.

As the children begin their three-hour uninterrupted work period, I take note of the energy in the classroom, and I observe while they are working independently. They are also talking amongst themselves, helping each other, discussing their work, even sometimes correcting each other's work. The older children like to help the younger children. As I begin my first lesson for the day, the children become interested in the lesson I'm giving on the map of the world. Once the lesson was over, I noticed one of my older students walked over to the child that had just received the lesson and started talking to her about the number of continents there are, and that even though Antarctica is two pieces it really is only one continent.

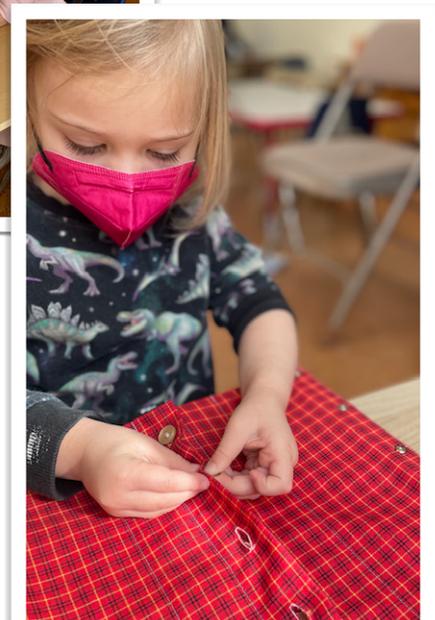
observation. I can also see their strengths and capabilities through my observation. Maria Montessori used the phrase "following the child". Observing is important because it helps me see where the children are in their lessons, who needs new lessons after mastering their work, and what child needs my assistance. When I step back and observe I also give the children the opportunity to rely on each other and the older children step in as role models. I sometimes joke to parents that it looks as if I'm doing nothing, but I am actually taking in so much information from the children through these observations. It is a crucial part of the work of a Montessori teacher.

As the new year begins, I am seeing this community with a fresh and rested mindset after coming back from the winter break. The children were extremely enthusiastic about being in the classroom. It is wonderful and heartwarming to see.

I would like to thank all the families for their generous gifts during the holiday season. February quickly rolled in I decorated the room with some celebratory love. The children have been able to do some fun arts and crafts with me as well.

Thank you all and until next month,
Ms. Tinajero

As a Montessori teacher, you learn so much about the children and their needs through



The AMI Recognized Montessori Experience:

- Includes one AMI trained teacher at the appropriate age level for each class.
- Features a mixed, three-year age group in each class.
- Has an appropriate number of children to ensure social development.
- Is driven by a three-hour uninterrupted work period in the morning and at least two hours in the afternoon.
- Has a complete set of materials for each class from a manufacturer authorized by AMI.

About AMI

The Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) was founded by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1929 to maintain the integrity of her life's work, and continues with the purpose of preserving that legacy. AMI's activities include empowering teachers and communities with Montessori education through the AMI Scientific Pedagogy Group, promoting and continuing the study, research, and reflection of Maria Montessori's work; through the Global Research Committee, collecting, studying, and disseminating current and relevant scientific literature on child development and education research, and promoting the continuous exchange of ideas, perspectives, and practices through such events as the AMI International Congress.

About AMI/USA

As the primary operational affiliate in the USA, the Association Montessori International of the United States (AMI/USA) is a national non-profit organization that upholds Dr. Maria Montessori's original vision.

AMI/USA objectives include:

- Promote global peace, human development, and human rights through the application of Montessori principles.
- Support the activities of our global organization Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).
- Support AMI/USA Member Schools through the AMI Recognition and Consultation program.
- Advance the understanding of AMI pedagogical principles and practices with families and communities.
- Promote the development of AMI teacher training to foster the availability of AMI Montessori education.
- Continue outreach and collaboration with AMI affiliates in the United States as well as kindred organizations that share the purpose of service to children.
- Advocate for educational policy that supports AMI Montessori education in the United States.
- Provide professional development opportunities in the United States through national and regional conferences, workshops, webinars and journals.
- Provide opportunities for collegial engagement through membership and discussion forums.
- Substantiate the value of AMI Montessori education through the support of traditional academic research.
- Maintain effective fiscal and organizational strength.

A new [paper](#) published in [Frontiers in Psychology](#) provides more evidence that a Montessori education may be superior to traditional methods of education, especially on measures relating to students' long-term psychological health and well-being.

"Wellbeing, or the felt experience of health, happiness, and flourishing, predicts several desirable outcomes including better health and work performance, longevity, and more positive social behavior and relations," say the authors of the research, led by Angeline Lillard of the University of Virginia. "Here we explored whether a different childhood experience, Montessori education, might predict higher adult well-being."

To test their hypothesis, the researchers recruited 1,905 U.S. adults who attended Montessori or conventional schools, ranging in age from 18 to 81, and had them complete a series of well-being surveys. They compared the survey results of the adults who had attended Montessori schools to those who had attended conventional schools. They found strong evidence of elevated psychological well-being among adults who attended Montessori schools as children.

"What surprised us is that pretty much everything in the sink turned out significant — on almost every survey, people who had spent at least two years in Montessori had higher well-being than people who never went to Montessori," says Lillard. "This was true even among the sub-sample who attended private schools for their entire pre-college lives. We also found that the longer one had attended a Montessori school, the higher their level of well-being."

The results held true even when the scientists accounted for other factors known to influence childhood and adult well-being.

"Our analyses controlled for age, race and ethnicity, gender, childhood socioeconomic status (SES), and private schooling, so we can confidently say that none of those factors is causing the results," says Lillard.

This is good news for the estimated 500,000 children who are currently enrolled in Montessori schools in the United States. "The Montessori Census currently registers 564 public and 2,211

private Montessori schools, but these are certainly underestimated," says Lillard. "Most public Montessoris are Title I schools, and over half the children at public Montessori schools are children of color, who particularly thrive at Montessori."

The authors hope their research inspires more parents to take a closer look at non-traditional educational models, such as Montessori.

"The study is one more data point in a growing body of research suggesting Montessori pedagogy is better for humans than is the common model," says Lillard. "And, since it is over 100 years since

people began implementing Montessori, it has been beta-tested — we know how to implement this pedagogy and are doing so all over the world. More people should know about it."

What makes this research even more impressive is the relative lack of research on the types of childhood experiences that encourage well-being in adulthood. For instance, one [study](#) found that adults who experienced more residential moves as children (i.e., moving from one town to another) are more likely to develop certain psychological and health problems. Beyond that, the findings are scant.

The researchers suggest that a Montessori curriculum boosts childhood and adult well-being by focusing on activities that promote self-determination (children in Montessori classrooms choose their own work most of the time and feel like they are in charge of their own educations), meaningful activities (children only take part in activities for which the underlying reasons are clear), and social stability and cohesion (classrooms span three years during which children have the same teacher and peer group).

"Montessori warrants further study, as it is the most common and long-lasting alternative progressive pedagogy in the

world and has several features that are endemic to well-being-enhancing educational environments," conclude the researchers.

[Mark Travers, Forbes Magazine 12/28/2021](#)

A full interview with Dr. Angeline Lillard can be found here: [Are Montessori schools better than public schools?](#)

Montessori curriculum boosts childhood and adult well-being by focusing on activities that promote self-determination

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