## **School Talk**

## **June 7, 2019**

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**PARENT CHAPERONES NEEDED**

All the Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary classes are going to the Natural History Museum on Thursday, June 13, and volunteers are needed. Each class can have 5 parents ride on the bus to the museum, but ideally the more, the better, so if you are willing to drive or metro to the venue, please let your teacher know. This is the last field trip of the school year. Thank you!

**ENSEMBLE INTEREST FORMS**

Ensemble interest forms were distributed  to 3rd Years in this week's Thursday Folders.  Please return them to Ms. Shakespeare by June 14.  Hands-on opportunities for students to explore instruments will begin next week.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE PEACE WALK**

Montessori’s last **PEACE WALK** with Drew Model school will take place on **Friday, June 21 at 9:30AM**. Wear **YELLOW** and meet at the archway. This is the last year the Montessori program will be making this walk through Nauck – a tradition that has gone on for many years. We are hoping that we will have a sea of yellow walk through Nauck on the last day of school to commemorate the end of our time at Drew Model School.

**MOVING HELP STILL NEEDED**

Teachers still need help, especially during the half-day on June 12. If you are able, please sign up!

<https://tinyurl.com/BigPackUp>

**4TH GRADE PARENTS - PAY IT FORWARD!**

Earn priority seating at your 5th grader's promotion next year! We are seeking 4th grade parents (from either program) to help out the school and PTA with this year's 5th Grade Promotion. It's your chance to "pay it forward" because those who help will receive priority seating at their own child's promotion the following year. We have different levels of participation - first come first serve. Please consider helping out.

[https://tinyurl.com/DMPromotion19](http://track.spe.schoolmessenger.com/f/a/dOlVlVfFyQtcGQyuJ46nWw~~/AAAAAQA~/RgRe27o2P0QhaHR0cHM6Ly90aW55dXJsLmNvbS9ETVByb21vdGlvbjE5VwdzY2hvb2xtQgoAALaG-lxFBcUiUhNLaGF5bmVzNzRAZ21haWwuY29tWAQAAAAB)

Graduation will be **Tuesday, June 18th** at Wakefield High School. Please do not sign up if you cannot commit. Any questions? E-mail Kia Haynes, the staff organizer for promotion, at kia.stevensonhaynes@apsva.us.

**PROGRAM NEWS**

-**The American Young Voices** performance by the Montessori 3rd graders went very well! On Monday, June 3rd, our 3rd grade Montessori singers performed for a crowd at the Eagle Bank Arena at George Mason University. A great time was had by all! Check out our Twitter moment here: <https://twitter.com/i/moments/1136064347766235136>

**-Spring Musical, Tuesday June 11** at 6:30PM. The After School choir presents “A Tribute to Broadway”! Come out and listen to wonderful performances of some favorite Broadway show tunes! Admission, as always, is free!

-**STEAM at Sunset, Thursday June 13** from **6PM – 8PM**. Drew Model School presents the Springtime edition of STEAM at Sunset! Come out and have some hands-on fun with STEAM activities. ALL students and families are welcome.

-**5th Grade Promotion** will be **Tuesday, June 18** at Wakefield High School. Doors open at 5:45PM, ceremony starts at 6PM. A call for help from 4th grade parents will be sent out in early June. 4th grade parents who help will receive priority seating at their child’s own 5th grade promotion. Volunteers from last year will be notified of their preferential seating about 2 weeks prior to the event.

**PTA NEWS**

**Original Works Orders**: You should have now received your child's Original Works products if you had placed an order before the deadline. If you have not received your order or have any questions, please email [mrinalprabhu@gmail.com](mailto:mrinalprabhu@gmail.com).

**UPCOMING DATES**

* June 11: Spring Musical, 6:30PM
* June 12: Early Release, 1:26 PM Dismissal
* June 13: Field Day
* June 13: STEAM at Sunset 6-8

**LINKS**

* Arlington Montessori Program on APS: <https://drew.apsva.us/the-montessori-program/>
* Montessori Public School of Arlington on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MPSArlington>
* Principal Genove on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CSGenove>
* Engage with APS https://www.apsva.us/engage/
* Lunch Menus: <https://apsva.nutrislice.com/menus-eula-splash>
* Arlington Montessori PTA: <https://acmpta.com/>.
* Arlington Montessori Action Committee (AMAC): <http://www.arlingtonmontessori.org/>

**A MONTESSORI MOMENT**

**Montessori Vocabulary 101**

**Sound Games**: Many children know the alphabet but have not analysed the sounds in words nor are they aware that words are made up of separate sounds *(phonemic awareness).* From the age of two *(or as soon as the child is speaking fluently)*, sound games can make them aware of the sounds in words. In England, they use the nursery game "I Spy." The sound of the letter and not the letter name is pronounced.

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**Montessori and Obedience: It’s Not a ‘Do Whatever You Want’ Method**

*by Jean Marie Kermode*

When you hear “Montessori,” do you picture a slightly chaotic mess of children, wandering around, doing as they please? A little girl over here pouring water all over the floor, perhaps, or a little boy over there snipping the leaves off the classroom plant?

Maybe it’s just me, but I get the sense that Montessori education is often very misunderstood. People hear the words, “follow the child,” and they assume that means, “allow the child to do whatever he wants, whenever he wants, and also wait upon him hand and foot.”

Luckily for everyone involved, this is not what it means to follow the child! Obedience, that sometimes neglected and forgotten virtue, has an important place in the Montessori philosophy.

It’s also totally achievable.

Let’s take a look at what Maria Montessori has to say about obedience and how to get it.

**Montessori and Obedience**

*“If we want to help life, the first condition of success is that we shall know the laws that govern it.” – Dr. Montessori*

With Montessori philosophy, it’s super important to understand the laws of nature before we try to jump into any quick tricks and fixes.

I’m also going to break it to you now: there aren’t really any quick tricks and fixes. There are practical measures we can take, but it’s crucial to understand what’s really going on first.

**What Maria Says**

So first, when we say obedience, what exactly are we talking about?

Maria Montessori is pretty straightforward about this: obedience is “a teacher commanding the children what to do and the children obeying the command by realizing it.” *(The Absorbent Mind, p. 383)*

Are you thinking what I’m thinking, though? Sometimes kids just don’t do what you ask them to do. Where’s the magic, Maria?

The magic, as usual, lies in a very important distinction. Dr. Montessori tells us that we can think of obedience in two ways:

We can think of obedience as wielded by the teacher who rules with an iron fist, commanding every action of her supposedly incapable students. The child in this situation has two options: totally give up developing her own will, or use her will to battle the teacher’s. Both are bad.

Or, we can think of obedience as part of a natural development. When a child is given room to develop her own will, *(and a little self-discipline to boot)* she will learn to obey out of free choice and love.

That’s the one we want.

We don’t want blind-obedience, servitude, or closed-mindedness. Neither do we want rebellion or chaos. We want our next generation to have the discipline, will, and humility to recognize and follow the wisdom and leadership of others when needed.

**The Three Levels of Obedience**

Let’s dig a little deeper into the idea of obedience as part of natural development.

During the first years of life, a child creates and develops his mental organs. *(It’s a lot like how he created and developed his physical organs in the womb.)* “Both knowledge and will have to be created,” *(The Absorbent Mind, p. 19)* which means that at first, the child does not have a will.

This is called the first level of obedience. The child obeys his natural impulses, because he does not have the consciousness or will to obey his parents or caretakers.

If you’ve ever begged an infant to stop crying, you get this. He can’t. At least not until you take care of whatever the problem is.

“It is necessary, therefore, to establish first the material possibility to obey in relation to the development reached.”  *(The Absorbent Mind, p. 383)*

In other words: the child needs to develop his will so that he can obey you.

As with all organs, mental and physical, they develop through exercise. For the first three years or so of life, the child creates and then exercises his will, and he gradually becomes more conscious of himself and his actions. So during this period, the child might obey you one day, and not the next. Practice makes perfect, it doesn’t start with perfect.

Little kids have to practice walking, until one day, they can walk perfectly, every time. It’s the same with obedience. We just have to allow them to practice.

The second level of obedience goes along with the next level of development. If the child is able to develop her will through practice, she is now able to obey you all the time. She is using her will to follow your will. This is awesome, and it’s what most of us consider the final goal.

But, Maria Montessori noticed an even higher, more beautiful level of obedience.

The third level of obedience goes along with an even further level of mental development. The child now also becomes conscious that you know and want what is best for him, and he decides that he wants that too.  Before, the child might have obeyed you reluctantly, because he really did not want to clean up after himself. Now, though, he obeys you with eagerness. He wants to clean up after himself, because he knows that you know what is best for him.

**Making it Happen**

Now that we understand that obedience is part of the natural process of mental development, we can take a look at how to help that development.

**Allow the Child to Practice Making Decisions**

I mentioned above that the child uses his will to reach a desirable form of obedience. And he develops his will through practice.

Sounds very cool, but what does this “practice” look like?

Give the child many opportunities to make a choice. For example, “You can drink milk or water with lunch.” “Which play clothes do you want to wear today?” “Do you want to play on the swings or on the slide?”

Avoid making “better” decisions for the child after he has already chosen. You may think milk tastes better with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches than water does, but that really doesn’t matter. When the child starts to develop his will but then feels it being overridden, he will naturally resent this. He then either combats your will with his own, or lets his will weaken.

Avoid swaying the child’s decision with your own preferences. See above.

Implement consequences instead of punishments. Sometimes things have to happen a certain way. The child doesn’t get to choose whether or not he wants to put away his toys. DO NOT enter a battle of the wills, where either you lose or she does. Instead, calmly, and with authority, let her know that it looks like she doesn’t want to play with toys any more since she is not willing to pick them up. Now, the child is faced with a choice, and conveniently, obeying you is starting to look like the smarter of her two options. *(Make sure to follow up with the consequences, too.)*

See how that works? It takes time, but gradually the child strengthens his will and starts to obey you. Win win.

How about that third level though…

**Go Above and Beyond With Love**

The third level of obedience is really a matter of love. The child’s will and understanding play a part, but who would so willingly give their will over to someone they don’t love, and who doesn’t love them?

So love your children and your students. This doesn’t mean spoiling them or giving them whatever they want. It means giving them what is best for them, even at your own expense. It means being happy to see them. It means being patient with them. It means telling them you love them.

Your child will learn to love from you.

Don’t stress about your child getting to this third level. No one is perfect, and everyone needs time. But do believe that your children are capable of amazing things.