



St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland

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Autumn 2009

Dear Members

Now that you have settled back into the school routine it is a good time to plan your professional development for the coming year. To assist you in doing so we have a busy and exciting Programme of Events planned country wide. Please note the Dates for your Diary. Further information and booking forms can be found on www.montessorireland.ie alternatively contact the office Kingston House, 64 Patrick Street, Dunlaoghaire, Co. Dublin Ph. 01.2805705. We would welcome your suggestions for any further workshops or contribution of articles or photographs to our Winter Newsletter.

Katherine Dunn
Chairperson

Dates for your Diary

26th September 2009
Speech and Language Workshop Dublin
28th September 2009
Practical Life Network Meetings
Kildare & Limerick
10th October 2009
Sensorial Education Galway
7th November 2009
Art & Craft Workshop Dublin
14th November 2009
Science Workshop Meath
14th November 2009
Geography Workshop Kildare
4th December 2009
St. Nicholas Night

" Pink Makes Me See Red ! "

Sue Palmer-A leading child development author attacks the marketing firms who target little girls

She's six, full of life and potential, and obsessed with pink. Pink bedroom, duvet and furniture. Pink toys and books. Pink clothes. Her parents feel slightly uneasy about paying out for all this pink stuff. Might it affect the way she thinks about herself? Could it turn her into some sort of 'pink princess' who'll later succumb to other stereotypes? An obsession with body image perhaps, or too early an interest in 'boyz', sexy clothes and make-up?

But there doesn't seem much choice. The stuff in the shops is exclusively pink, and their daughter *really* loves the colour. All her friends at school are into pink - and no caring parent wants their little girl to feel left out. Anyway, she's entitled to have a favourite colour, isn't she? Besides, she looks so sweet in that little outfit.



Please don't misunderstand me. I've nothing against pink. Some of my best friends wear it -grown women who've made a rational choice about which colour they reckon suits them best.

I've nothing against marketing either - as an adult, I enjoy the creativity and wit with which adverts keep me informed about the goods and services available.

What bothers me about the pink plague infecting three to eight-year-old girls is that they aren't old enough to make rational choices. Their brains aren't sufficiently developed for the application of reason. So, when marketers turn their big



guns on children, they're not so much entertaining and informing as brain-washing them. Until children reach the middle years of primary school, they operate mainly on emotion - the neural networks underpinning rational thought are still in the process of

formation. Deep emotional attachments made in the early years are likely to influence the way they behave for the rest of their lives. As St Ignatius Loyola once said: 'Give me the boy until he is seven and I will give you the man.' Big business is all too aware of this. In 1992, marketing guru James McNeal alerted corporate America in his book *Kids As Customers* to the money-making potential of children. As he put it: 'Kids are the most unsophisticated of all consumers they have the least and therefore want the most. Consequently, they are in a perfect position to be taken.' This rallying cry coincided with the arrival of children's commercial TV channels and the increasing global reach of technology. Within a few years, TVs and other electronic equipment began moving into children's bedrooms. So with increasingly sophisticated TV ads, product placement, web-based 'advergams', internet pop-up adverts and ads on social networking websites, marketers have acquired access to children's minds beyond Loyola's wildest dreams. And well outside most parents' radar.



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Practical Life -Grace and Courtesy Activities

Mina Walsh Drumcondra Montessori School

Dr. Montessori introduced *Grace and Courtesy* exercises as a response to the young child's need for order and to help the child function in a socially acceptable way in his environment. *Grace and Courtesy* lessons give the child the vocabulary and explicit instructions on social behaviour necessary for him to interact with those around him. *Grace and Courtesy* lessons are given to each child in the environment and usually introduced to a group as social behaviour is clearly a community activity. This allows the child to have a clear understanding as well as a place to perfect himself with others. Social behaviour is also learnt in a Montessori environment by observing how others behave in natural situations. The adults act as role model of appropriate behaviour. In this way the child incorporates social graces and good manners in his everyday life. Some grace and courtesy lessons that are particularly relevant as we start the new school year and in the current climate of the swine flu are included below.

(Pictures maybe used to make freeze & matching cards)

Hand Washing at the Sink or Hand Basin

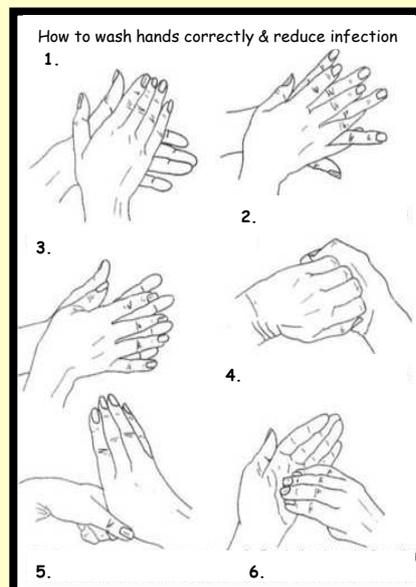
Material Soap dispenser, individual hand towel or paper towel, apron, sink or hand basin.

Introduction

Tell the child that you are going to show him how to wash hands correctly. Explain the importance of washing hands to encourage personal hygiene and to prevent spread of infection. Hand washing needs to be carried out before preparing and or eating food, after use of bathroom and after coughing or sneezing or blowing the nose.

Presentation

- Put on the apron and invite child to put on an apron.
- Roll up sleeves. Invite child to roll up sleeves.
- Turn on the tap.
- Place hands palms downwards under the running water.
- Turn hands over to wet the backs of hands.
- Remove hands from under the water and point fingers downwards to let the water drip from fingertips.
- Place left hand palm upwards under soap dispenser and use right hand to press down dispenser.



Hand Washing Song (Tune: Row, Row, Row Your Boat)

Wash, wash, wash your hands, play our handy game,
Rub and scrub, scrub and rub, germs go down the drain Hey!
Wash, wash, wash your hands, play our handy game,
Rub and scrub, scrub and rub, dirt goes down the drain Hey!

If children wash their hands with soap and water during the time it takes to sing this song then they will have effectively cleaned them.

- Place left hand flat on right hand. Rub palm to palm back and forth to create lather. **(Picture 1)**
Lather for 20 seconds (Singing Washing Hand's song takes about 20 seconds)
- Place right palm on back of left hand and rub back of left hand. Place left palm on back of right hand and rub. **(Picture 2)**
- Rub palms again with fingers interlaced-washing inter digital spaces **(Picture 3)**
- Interlock fingers and agitate to wash nails. **(Picture 4)**
- Wrap left hand around right thumb and lightly rotate left hand back and forth around thumb. Repeat for left thumb **(Picture 5)**
- Place left thumb and fingers around right wrist and rotate back and forth. Repeat for left wrist.
- Rub right palm with left finger tips. Repeat for left. **(Picture 6)**
- Place both hands under the running water.
- Place hands palms downwards under the running water. Turn hands over to rinse the backs of hands.
- Remove hands from water and hold palms together above the sink and shake downwards twice.
- Place hand towel on left palm and wrap left hand with towel around thumb and rotate and similarly with each fingers one at time.
- Rub back of right hand, rub palm. Place left thumb and fingers around right wrist and rotate back and forth to dry wrist. Repeat for left hand.
- Place the hand towel on the tap and use hand towel to turn off tap.
- Dry the sink using the hand towel.
- Place wet hand towel in laundry bin and replace the wet hand towel with a dry one.
- Take of your apron. Offer the child the opportunity to wash his hands.

Joke

What do you call a germ
who wants to have a good
time? Answer on P4

Coughing Etiquette

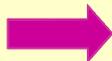
Introduction Invite 3-4 children to come participate in your lesson. Explain to the children that you are going to show them how to cough correctly.

Presentation Turn head to the right a little away from the children. Place tissue over mouth or place your right forearm about an inch away from your mouth. Exaggerate a cough. Once finished with the cough, close your mouth. Remove your right arm from in front of your mouth. Turn your head back to face the group. Invite each child to practice what to do when they cough.

Note: The same presentation can be used for **Sneezing Etiquette**



Catch it



Bin it



Kill it

See Guidance for preschool settings in preparing for and managing Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Swine Flu) www.hse.ie

The Work of a Speech and Language Therapist Sinead Finn

I am employed by the Health Services Executive (HSE) as a speech and language therapist (SLT) working full time in a school during term time. For my "summer holidays" - June and July I spend back in the clinics with my fellow SLTs. We work as part of the community health services team alongside other disciplines such as public health nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychology, social work and dietetics. The children are usually referred to our service by public health nurses (PHNs), teachers, GPs or by the parents themselves. Referrals to our service are for children from birth to 18 years. Children with diagnoses of autistic spectrum disorder, emotional/behavioural disorders and children with moderate-profound learning difficulty are not seen in our service. We offer a clinic based service i.e. the child and parent come to visit us by appointment (usually). In some cases we make visits to preschools or schools where relevant.

Seeing children for initial assessment is a very interesting part of my job, there is great variability in both the age of children that present but also in the types of difficulties children may have. In a typical initial assessment a detailed case history (including birth, developmental, medical and schooling history of the child) is taken through discussion with parents. I then 'screen' all areas of communicative function (e.g. understanding of language, expression, speech sounds, voice, fluency), and then complete a more in-depth assessment of particular areas that may be problematic. The assessment tools I use maybe play based or book based, use objects or pictures and maybe completed by the child or the parent depending on the age of the child and the presenting difficulty. Following the assessment itself I will have a chat to the parents about the child's performance in different areas of the assessment. We discuss whether the child's interaction and communication in the session is typical of how s/he would be at home and what the next step will be for the child.

Most of the children who are seen for initial assessment are waitlisted for intervention in either group or individual therapy. We generally see children for six-eight weeks where they attend for one session a week. In some cases we will chose to review the child in 3-6 months to see if the child has made progress in a specific area of development. In some other cases we may refer the child on to other services in the community for example audiology (for hearing assessment) or psychology.

The two most common presentations at initial assessment are school-aged children referred by parents or teachers who have difficulties pronouncing certain sounds in words. The other common one has been younger children aged 2-3 years who present with good play skills and age appropriate

understanding of language but who use very few words expressively. In both of these cases I would recommend intervention in different types of therapy.

I also see children in small groups (typically 2-3 children) for therapy focusing on speech sounds. We generally group children according to age and type of sounds. For example, one group of children aged 7 years were producing the 's' sound with their tongue coming out through their teeth (a lisp'd 's'). Another group of 4 year olds were saying 'b' instead of 'f' in words (e.g. saying 'binger' for 'finger'). In both groups I worked with each child in turn to help them produce the sounds accurately. We played a game (e.g. jenga) during which each child practices their target sound/words and then takes a turn with the game. The children enjoy group therapy and are really motivated to practice sounds both by the game and by the presence of their peers.

The job has great variety on a daily basis as you never know who will walk in the door for initial assessment and what unique challenges any given client can bring to the process. So although I may not have stories to tell of far flung destinations on my return to the school staff room in September I will have met parents and children from varying walks of life who make my job worth working for during the summer months!

Sinead Finn, BSc (Clinical Language)
Senior Speech and Language Therapist

Reminder: Sinead Finn will give a Speech and Language Workshop on Saturday 26th September 2009 in St. Nicholas Montessori House, 16 Adelaide Street, Dunlaoghaire to download an application form please visit www.montessoriareland.ie or phone 01.2805705

St. Nicholas Montessori College News

As we approach the beginning of a new Montessori academic year the joy of meeting new pupils/students helps us all to reaffirm the benefits of Montessori Education as a preparation for life. We take time to review previous lesson, prepare fresh challenges for ourselves and the pupils/students and anticipate the outcomes at the end of the year. But what about mid-term, mid-year when the enthusiasm dims? Personally, I benefit from a weekly top-up of Montessori theory which comes in the form of Kids Talk, an on-line column which is e mailed to my mail box every Saturday, written by Maren Schmidt, a Montessori teacher in Oregon. www.kidstalk.com

Enjoy the challenge of the new academic year.

June Hosford, Director



6-9 Class



St. Nicholas Montessori School

After a busy summer refurbishing two of our classrooms St. Nicholas Montessori School re-opened on Thursday 27th August welcoming back both old and new pupils. We also welcome four new classroom assistances and we look forward to a fulfilling year working together.

Noreen Tierney, Principal



Membership Renewal

Keep in touch- check your membership is up to date. Memberships forms can be downloaded from our website www.montessoriireland.ie.



3-6 Class



"Pink Makes Me See Red!" Continued from Page 1

Multinational corporations use child psychologists and million-pound budgets to play mind games with children. And it's worth the effort. There's 'guilt money' to be gleaned from harassed parents trying to juggle work and child-rearing. There's 'pester power' to be harnessed, to help sell not just children's products, but food, holidays, even cars. Six-month-old babies can be trained to respond to corporate logos. The baby sees a chummy little character repeatedly on screen then, perched in a supermarket trolley, points to it on a shelf . . . and the parent buys the product. Most important of all, there's brand loyalty to be nurtured while brains are young and malleable.

The pink plague dominating high streets is a visible symptom of this commercial takeover of early childhood. Marketing agencies know that by the age of three, children become aware of their gender. At the same time, they become prey to an extremely powerful human impulse - the need to belong to the group.

For countless millennia, anyone who didn't conform to the norms of their tribe could expect a lingering death, social or otherwise. The yearning for inclusion is probably written into our DNA. Once children reach nursery age, marketers taking account of this 'inclusion gene' aim their messages at boys or girls, with clearly defined gender norms. In the playground, children cleave with emotional intensity to the symbols of their gender, so peer pressure is dragged in to serve the commercial process. The forces of consumerism have infiltrated children's culture so successfully it's become extremely difficult for a little girl to resist the lure of pink. Or for a boy to regard it with anything other than disgust. And politically correct parents who've diligently avoided talking about the gender wars are horrified to find their offspring suddenly devoted to stereotypes. But gender stereotyping aside, that bonny six-year-old in her pink bolero and tiara raises a host of other questions about the way we're rearing our children. Or rather, about the way we're letting other people rear them.

In the past, the major influences in children's lives were their parents, family and playmates - local children also influenced by the adults in their lives. No matter what these adults' personal value systems, we can assume the vast majority cared about the long-term well-being of the infants they were rearing. But in our brave new global village, parents and family are being pushed out of the picture. According to a new Childwise survey, today's children spend up to six hours a day staring at a screen. So market forces increasingly influence their tastes and habits. And marketing executives don't have children's welfare at heart - they just want to sell more stuff. Little girls should be outside in the sunshine, laughing with their friends, playing imaginatively with whatever comes to hand - making dens, dressing up in old clothes and scraps of material, *choosing* the roles they play for themselves. They shouldn't be glued to a screen, learning how to pester their parents for the latest must-have toy and being groomed for a lifetime of consumption. Today's pink plague is a wake-up call. Marketing to children under eight is downright immoral - and we should do our best to stop it.



Sue Palmer is a writer, broadcaster and consultant on the education of young children.
www.suepalmer.co.uk

Transforming Ireland



Answer to Joke
A Fungi (Fun Guy)