

## The Montessori Peace Curriculum

"Everyone talks about peace, but no one educates for peace. People educate for competition, and this is the beginning of any war. When we educate to cooperate and be in solidarity with one another, that day we will be educating for peace."

Maria Montessori

Young children bring to our world a unique nature and gift. They are born to absorb that which is around them, as Maria Montessori puts it, "like a sponge". They absorb what they hear, see, touch, smell, taste and feel within their environment. Their personalities are self-created from these initial experiences.

The Montessori Peace Curriculum was put into a formal state by Ms. Sonnie Mc Farland, who pioneered teaching of peace to the young child. Sonnie is a longtime Montessori Primary teacher with over 40 years of experience in the Primary classroom. Lessons of love, kindness, compassion, generosity and tolerance fit perfectly within the "COUGAR" attributes of DCS Montessori. Maria Montessori recognized early in her lifetime serving children that repetition was key to mastering any skill. Children need repetition not only with numbers and sounds but exposure over and over and over again to these important qualities of helping and serving their peers with kindness, caring, brave and helpful words and a giving smile. These are all activities involved in the Montessori Peace Curriculum.

It is vital that young children first learn, yes, learn, to love themselves. They absorb this idea from birth with close and substantial caring from their caregivers. They learn early on that they do matter, that you do like them and that they are a part of a larger group, their family. Sonnie speaks to the young child about their "love light", that inner perception near their heart, that allows them to have feelings of peace and joy or a weight that is heavy to carry when things are not at their best for them. They are taught that everyone, yes, everyone, including you and I, walk the Path to Peace or the Road of Difficulty. In simple words and activities, the young child is taught how to maneuver themselves off the Road of Difficulty and find their way back to a Path of Peace.

Within the Montessori Peace Curriculum, the young child is exposed to activities where they learn to make peaceful choices for themselves and others in their inner circle. They learn how to listen to others and resolve conflicts. They become aware that they have the ability to calm their own bodies and minds without outside stimulus or intervention. Other activities assist them to identify and then express their own emotions as well as appreciating differences in people.

Young children learn to embrace the fact that all people have a spirit, or love light, within them and the keys to finding this in all of us, regardless of the differences. Children find comfort in this belief and have the ability to carry this throughout their life. But they need practice and repetition with this, in the family, in our schools and throughout society. Let them spread the word!

Parent Tip of the Month: It is never too early to involve your child in charitable avenues. You can find a cause worthy to your family to let your child's love light shine. Work side by side with them at a food pantry, start a neighborhood drive to collect coats and shoes for those in need. The reasons to do this and the ideas for where and how are endless.

The DCS Primary Teachers