

Miss Kelly's

NEWS

Back to School!

September 2010

Directress' Message

Greetings Everyone!

Summer is coming to an end, and children are returning from vacation - welcome back, Emery and Lucia! Other changes are taking place - we are saying goodbye to Jay and to Tom in September. And we are looking forward to a more stable schedule for the children and the caregivers.

Reading and writing

In August, some of the children started working with sandpaper letters. This, along with frequent sound games, is in preparation for reading and writing. Sound games bring the children's awareness to the sounds that make up their everyday speech. They learn to recognize sound patterns, how words begin and end, and how they are in the middle, so that when they begin to learn the symbols for the sounds, they will make associations that will later lead to spontaneously writing out complete words. They are exposed to language all day long - books on the bookshelf, conversations, classification cards that introduce new vocabulary, maps on the walls. The activities they undertake in the classroom are an indirect preparation for reading and writing as well, in that some develop fine motor skills useful for holding a pencil, and others incorporate a left to right progression that will later help in orderly reading and writing direction.

Order and organization

One of the goals of a Montessori classroom is to maintain order - something children desire in the first place. We teach them where materials go, and the order of operations in setting up a work place and completing an activity. We are consistent with having them tuck in their chairs and putting away their work mats. If they are not willing to put away their materials, we will put them away for them and invite them to do so next time, so that the classroom remains an orderly environment. Order in the child's environment leads to order in the child's inner being, which also helps with clear thinking and concise self-expression in speaking and in writing later on.

Children's voices

In a traditional Montessori setting, the children's voices are the only ones heard in the classroom. The adults have adjusted themselves such that any intervention on their part is casually and quietly whispered into a child's ear, or is made up only of slow and deliberate movements that show the child very clearly how to use the materials in the classroom. In my experience, my slow and deliberate movements which gained the deep interest of several children also triggered the children to quieten themselves as they absorbed the lesson, with quiet minds as well as a quiet bodies.

August highlights

In August, the children went on numerous walks around the neighborhood - to the local co-op where there is a children's corner with books and chairs, to a construction site where they saw a crane and an excavator building new condominiums, to the fruit and vegetable shop down the street, and to the NDG Park when the group was small enough to be safe. The children made bannock, cornbread that failed (it was my fault, and I still don't know what went wrong!) and muffins. They also made some strawberry jam, just like in the book they've been reading. Mr. Tom's dog, Jack, got a good washing and brushing with Miss Ashley.

The children have been showing more interest in the dressing frames (they use these to practice doing up snaps, velcro, zippers and buttons) as well as the pouring and the threading activity. They're really getting into some interesting habits! They do a lot more walking in the house, and seem to be aware of each other a lot more, in terms of the space they are occupying as well as the emotions they sometimes have difficulty with.

As always, it is true a joy for all of us to have this chance to learn and grow with your wonderful children. Thank you for being a part of our adventure.

Sincerely,

Miss Kelly

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Voice is the touchpoint between our bodies and our space, and each other. Before a child reaches with their hands, they often cry out or say something. Sometimes a Quiet Voice is more comfortable than any other. We've been practicing the Quiet Voice. Sometimes we say "Quiet voice please," or even "Sshh!", or simply making a "Sshh" gesture. Sometimes what works best is "Show me your quiet voice." The idea of "show me" is very helpful ("show me how you walk" and "show me how you clean this up" is popular.) This is fun to practice at home, especially when your child asks for things in a loud or demanding voice. You can say "Show me your quiet voice" and they might just do that!
- September is the month of Mexico! The children will see Diego Rivera's and Frida Kahlo's art work on the classroom walls, and pictures of Mexican life will be available to them on a tray on a shelf. They will hear Mexican music, and will make tortillas, and possibly a piñata!
- Holidays. Please note Miss Kelly's will be closed for the Labour Day statutory holiday on **Monday September 6th**. We will also be closed **October 11th** for Thanksgiving. Our next closure will be at Christmastime.

- Clothing. As always, please make sure we have appropriate outer wear. Autumn can be a **WET** and **COLD** season, so keep the spare clothing supply well-stocked. Boots and a rain slicker are always handy.
- Can we? Please think about **drop-off time**. We've been a bit slacker about this over the summer, but would like to renew the routine of having an uninterrupted work period from 9:00 to 10:30. This means the children should all arrive **before 9:00** so that they can have a few minutes to say goodbye and remove their outdoor clothing before joining the classroom. *Not to worry, we know life happens!* If you can't make it for 9:00, please try and wait until 10:30. If that's not convenient, please do come in, but be as quiet and non-intrusive as possible.
- Announcements. If you have anything you wish to announce in our newsletter let us know. We can also send out notices to all parents, so any announcements at any time can be forwarded to Miss Kelly for review.

