

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL - EARLY LEARNING, PRIMARY & SECONDARY

CHRONICLE

AUTUMN



"ME DO IT"
FOSTERING TODDLERS' INDEPENDENCE

GUNYAH
A GREAT START TO THE YEAR

**THE NATURE OF
THE ADOLESCENT**
WHO IS THE ADOLESCENT?

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Welcome to the first edition of the Chronicle for 2023. We have had a wonderful start to the 2023 school year, with many new families joining the Northside community throughout Term 1. We are so thankful for all our families at Northside, and we really appreciate the sense of community that exists through the engagement of parents in our school.

Harmony Day

One aspect of the Northside community that is greatly appreciated by all is the diversity which exists across the whole community. It is wonderful to have students and families from so many cultural backgrounds in the school, and it is especially evident when we have celebrations such as Harmony Day. On this day many of our students attended school in their cultural dress, and throughout the day students were entertained by an African drumming group, Bollywood dancers, and a performance from an Indonesian dancer who also taught the students some dances. The culmination of the day was the amazing multicultural lunch provided by all our families, where we enjoyed a wide array of foods from all around the world.

3-6 Class Safari

As a Montessori school, one of our key objectives is to help our families better understand the Montessori methodology and the unfolding nature of the method from toddler, 3–6, 6–9, 9–12 and now 12–18. The foundation for the Montessori curriculum is developed in our 3–6 classrooms. The work that students undertake in this section of the school provides the foundational understandings for their work in the Montessori primary classroom.



To assist parents in their understanding of the work in the 3–6 classroom, we held a 3-6 Class Safari parent education event in Term 1. During the evening, parents got to experience a range of presentations across a number of the curriculum areas in the 3–6 classroom. Presentations in Practical Life, Language and Mathematics demonstrated the manner of the presentations as well as the way this work is built upon in future years.

Involving parents in the delivery of these presentations provides them with a hands-on understanding of the work their children are undertaking in the 3–6 Montessori classroom. This hands-on approach also provides parents with a sense of wonder at the design and function of the Montessori materials in our classrooms, and how the child's understanding unfolds as they move through the school.





Welcome Event

A major event in the Term 1 Northside calendar is our Welcome Event. This year the theme of the event was Disco. Our Welcome Event is provided for families and students to come together to celebrate the beginning of a new school year and hopefully provide an opportunity for families to get to know each other.

The Welcome Event is run by the school, and is supported by a number of parent volunteers who assist greatly in the planning and running of the event. With over 300 of our school community attending, this was a tremendous evening, with most people dressing up in 'disco' themed outfits and really getting into the spirit of the event. Thank you to all those who attended, and particularly to those parents involved in the organisation.

Adolescent Program

This year is our second year of the Adolescent Program, and we are so pleased to have Year 7 and Year 8 students in the program this year. We have 15 students in the program in 2023 and we are looking forward to another great year ahead.

The Years 7 and 8 students have already participated in a camp to Crookwell, near Goulburn, and are in the process of planning their Term 3 camp, which will be a trip to New Zealand. There are many exciting events and activities planned for the Adolescent Program, and we look forward to another busy year ahead.

As I look back on Term 1, I reflect that it is such a privilege to be part of the Northside community. With Montessori education central to all that we do, Northside celebrates the value of this educational method through our growing and thriving community. As a school that encompasses early learning, primary school and now secondary school, we really do seek to follow the child through all these significant stages of their development.

The events of Term 1 have allowed us to come together, to share and to celebrate the many things that make Northside such a wonderful community. Thank you to everyone for your part in this.

Adam Scotney
Principal

“ME DO IT”: FOSTERING TODDLERS’ INDEPENDENCE

by Suzanne Liew and Sandra Sin (Transition Class)

“Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed.” – Maria Montessori

From an early age, children are learning how to be independent. Independence is a key goal in Montessori education, and children asserting their independence is an important part of growing up and developing their sense of self. Independence promotes confidence and self-esteem through internal sense of purpose and motivation. It also allows children to be accountable for their choices, to become good decision-makers.

Here are some practical tips to support children’s desire for independence at home.

Offer choices

To promote critical thinking, decision-making skills and a sense of independence, young children are offered appropriate choices with some boundaries. For example, on a cold winter night, when children pick the clothing they are going to wear the following morning, they are offered the choice of a jumper or a jacket. Children are encouraged to make many small decisions in their daily routines, and carers will have the final say in matters of safety, health and wellbeing.

Set up the environment for success

How the environment is set up can make a big difference to children’s independence. If we organise a prepared environment that is safe, orderly and accessible to children by providing child-sized furniture and objects accessible to their height, children are more likely to experience success in caring for themselves, for example getting dressed, brushing their teeth, combing their hair and using the toilet independently.

Manage expectations

By breaking a complex task into small, achievable jobs, children learn skills through having a role and/or responsibility in house chores. Toddlers can carry their own lunch boxes, put toys away, put their shoes by the door, and help with chores like folding the laundry or cleaning up a table after a meal. Children at this age instinctively love to help and getting them involved in these small tasks helps them develop practical life skills and fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership.



Allow mistakes and provide ample time to perform new tasks

Mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. When the child makes a mistake, please resist the urge to step in and fix it. Instead, let children try it again and learn from those trial-and-error moments. For example, let them experience the consequence of filling up an overflowing cup and show them how to clean up afterwards. When they are doing a new task or something unfamiliar, provide extra time and guidance rather than rushing them to complete that task.

As educators and carers, we are indirectly telling children that we believe in their abilities and that we trust them by allowing them to do things on their own. Giving toddlers the gift of independence lets them know that we value them so that they grow up with a strong sense of self-belief that they can anything they put their mind to.

Independent children are more likely to take risks, try new things, explore their environment and build their resilience to life's challenges ahead. We support their growth to become confident, self-reliant and capable individuals in the future by giving them space, time and opportunities and letting them know that we are always around to help them along and catch them if they fall.

BROLGA Q AND A

by Margret Ranada Palma (3–6 Directress)

Brolga started 2023 as a “normalised” class. We welcomed five new children and said goodbye to two, as well as bid Kay and Montse farewell. Changes happen in the classroom, whether there are new children or adults who come and go. These are simply stages of life we go through, and the children are exposed to these experiences.

An educator is faced with many challenges year-in and year-out. Teaching is a profession that requires a lot of patience, tenacity and a sense of humour. This vocation is fulfilling, but we also must be prepared for the difficulties we face day-to-day. First, we often need to temper our perfectionist tendencies or habits as, due to our training, we Montessori teachers have often developed an exactness in the way we do things. Let’s call them “quirks”, so to speak. Secondly, we celebrate the highs of the day and reflect on some regrets from our mistakes, trying to improve in order to avoid the same mistakes. “What can we do better?” or “How can we help this child?”. And lastly, we learn our own life lessons every day, mostly from the children, as they are our guides. We revel in our anecdotes, in the nuances of the children’s actions and words as we make our daily observations.

As the directresses work with the children and promote a peaceful classroom, the way Maria Montessori advocated, we also nurture the relationships with the parents in our community.

We aim to do this to create a mutual understanding and consistency with the children’s home life. During the mid-term catch-up chats with our new families and the Extended Day children, some of the Brolga parents have had questions that they did not get the opportunity to ask earlier. Therefore, we have decided to address them here.

What food would you suggest we pack for lunch?

Children have varied palates, as families have different approaches with food. As a rule, in school and in class, we encourage healthy eating and healthy foods. What kind of foods do you think will help sustain the child throughout the day with the number of activities they do inside and outside the class? How much can your child eat? Pack enough so you can gauge how much they eat. Offering them too many options in their lunchboxes can be too confusing for the young child. I have noticed throughout the years that children who finish their lunches have a healthy portion of carbohydrates, protein, and a side of veggies. Some parents include cut-up fruit or little nibbles as a treat for after their main meals. Use food containers that the children can independently handle. Avoid sending plastic-packaged foods as much as possible. This is to promote an awareness of doing our part for the environment.



When do children start to understand the concept of time?

Time has many elements. It is a rather abstract concept for the children in the 3–6 cycle, but they hear the language used around them, whether it's telling time by the hour, or the time to do things. The concept of time has been introduced to the child's life in its natural form, in their physical environment. In a general sense, they know when it is day – the sun is shining and it is light outside – or when it is night – the sun has set, and it becomes dark outside. They also know when it is time to eat, whether it is time to have a snack or to have lunch with their friends. The children have an inner clock, as their bodies will remind them when it is time to eat, go to the toilet, or rest. So they know that there is a time to do specific things and there are various actions they cannot do at other times. To concretise this concept of time, we introduce the Clock Lesson to the children when they are ready, formalising the symbols with the language, how to tell time by the hour to start with. It is a wooden clock with all the markings and the hands to aid the children to tell the time.

Notice that the children know that when they wake up and start their day, they get ready for school. Through a regular routine, they know that school begins at 8:30 am and ends at 2:45 pm. They know this as a rule, and they adhere to this rule. These examples already show the child what time means, and they themselves are a kind of clock when they announce when it is time to go to school or when it is "home time". When they get to the Second Plane of Development (6–12 years of age), there will be a more concrete understanding of time and the passage of time.

When will my child learn to read?

All children are different. There is no specific age when they read, but they are offered the keys to learn to read. We play sound games with them and later introduce the Sandpaper Letters. With the Sandpaper Letters, we phonetically say the sound of the letter instead of naming the letter as they learn to trace them sensorially, feeling how the letters are formed when they touch the boards. They learn these from the age of three to three-and-a-half.

They are then introduced to the Movable Alphabet to build words as they sound out each letter they hear or say when they think of words. After all these exercises are repeated, the children are then given slips of papers that have 'messages' or 'commands' for the children to read and act out, at age four-and-a-half or five. There is no prescribed age for when they learn to read, and these are merely estimates. I've met a few children enter our classroom at the age of three who are already reading, while some reach the age of five and are still learning to blend the words or identify sounds and letters. We have different lessons and strategies to prepare children to learn to read. Learning support is also provided if there are challenges along the way in the 3–6 environment. In the home environment, continue to read to your children every day to instil the love of books and reading. The doors will open to this sensitive period of language explosion. Stay tuned for the next Chronicle for parent information session to learn more about language as a learning area in the 3-6 stage.

How do we know what she has learnt?

"What did you do today in class?" is a question commonly asked by parents when they see their children at the end of the day. "Nothing!" is a typical answer.

The children are given presentations with the array of materials and activities we have in the prepared environment. We invite you to attend the parent information sessions held at school to have a better understanding of what the children do when they talk about the Pink Tower or the Golden Beads. This gives parents an insight to their child's life. Log in to your Transparent Classroom account to have a glimpse of what your child or the class is up to. Once a fortnight, there are updates or photos of the children in the 3–6 classes. Attend events such as the Mother's Day or Father's Day Breakfast to witness first-hand what your child does in class. Have a chat with the directress or set up a meeting if there are any concerns. Arrange a time to observe the whole dynamic of the class, not just of your child, but their peers as well. What are their interactions like with the other children, the guides in the room, and the prepared environment? Rephrase questions for your child that will allow them to expand on their conversational skills: "Who did you work with today?" or "What was your favourite activity for the day?".

Will my child be disadvantaged moving to Primary without having a full year of the social and academic experience of an Extended Day child?

What if a child is not ready to move up when they turn 6? Did Maria Montessori automatically move children at 6 or could she see the value of a little extra time with a trusted teacher to focus on key skills such as reading, and a longer chance to be one of the older, more responsible children in the cycle?

What can we focus on in Term 2 to help our child at home prepare for her transition?

How do we know if she's advancing appropriately?

These last four questions are related, as we look at each child in class as separate entities, thus our method of individualised learning. If I were to imagine what Dr Maria Montessori would say as she were giving a lecture, I could only imagine her saying: "Follow the child."

We take into consideration the Four Planes of Development. Our children in the 3–6 stage belong to the First Plane (birth to 6 years of age). You, the parents, have already set the foundation for the First Plane by providing a loving, nurturing and secure home environment in the first three years of your child's life. From entering the classroom on their first day, their path to independence and autonomy now continues, and is further established as parents realise that their children must act out the self-constructive process for themselves, as separate entities from their primary caregivers.

"The child between three and six years of age has a special psychological characteristic – the absorbent mind. He is preparing the mind to adapt so he takes in everything which is presented to him without criticism, unlike the older child who has begun to reason, and to seek into the reason of things. This child builds up the mind, because all the ideas that are around him are incarnated in his mind..."

From the point of view of learning, different types of mentality are seen in the different periods of a child's life. Many have noticed that a child of five years begins to show certain changes in his mentality, and that at the age of seven, he is mature enough to receive certain other kinds of knowledge. All these different stages of the child's mentality must be studied. The differences in each stage are complex..."

Our method should correspond to these different stages of the child's life, finding a different environment and different way of dealing with him in each stage..."



Education must, therefore, correspond to these changes. A plan of education must be constituted for each stage.” – Maria Montessori

The school-aged child (Kindergarten/Extended Day children) begins to understand written language, or reading and writing. Doing so opens a whole new world for them, wherein they are comfortable and confident in their surroundings where symbolic language is everywhere. When these children practise their grace and courtesies during their socialisation with others, they feel secure and assured around others. They are ready to begin to explore the larger world beyond the 3–6 class and home.

Academically speaking, when they get to the 6–9 stage, there is an overlap of lessons, presentations, activities and materials. The children receive learning support should there be any concerns in meeting outcomes for certain curriculum areas. The directresses “follow the child” in all the stages in a Montessori school.

Socially, they have been preparing themselves, as observed in their day-to-day interactions in the classroom, when they exercise their leadership skills with the younger children. The guides in the room provide opportunities as well to encourage these skills of responsibility and being a good role model to others. Situations in the classroom with the mixed-age groups naturally provide the setting for leading others.

We take into consideration the child’s overall wellbeing and “readiness”, as we have a holistic approach for a child’s development. Emotionally and psychologically, is this child ready to move

up? What other opportunities can we provide to launch them into the next stage? This is when the parents and the guides work hand-in-hand to ensure that the child’s progress is monitored as we witness their growth and maturity to unfold. Allow the children to make decisions for themselves. If they cannot, offer them two choices to aid them. Give them chores at home to feel like an important contributing member of the family and to give them more responsibility. Take a step back and watch your child blossom as they take the lead for activities they want to do at home, especially during the holiday breaks. In our community, we have three elements that go hand in hand: the trifecta of (1) the child, (2) the guide and (3) the parents. After all, Montessori is not simply a philosophy or method in educating children, it could also be seen as a way of life. How do you “Montessori” at home?

If you’re interested in reading further about the Montessori method, we suggest the following resources:

- Helfrich, M. S. 2011. *Montessori Learning in the 21st Century: A Guide for Parents & Teachers*. New Sage Press.
- Ramachandran, R. (Ed.). 1998. *Creative Development in the Child: The Montessori Approach Volume I*. Kalakshetra Publications.

GUNYAH: A GREAT START TO THE NEW YEAR

by Vyshnavi Bharadwaj

We welcome our new students and assistants – Kieran and Kay – to the Gunyah community. We are delighted and thrilled to have you all on board with us as part of the Gunyah family.

Term 1 has been a phenomenal term for Gunyah. The weeks have flown by, with children experiencing new and interesting events and activities. The children have steadily got back into the rhythm of work, and our youngest children, who are entering the age of the "Reasoning Mind", ask questions which begin with "How" and "What if...?". These questions have led them to start some great in-depth research and projects.

The older children in the classroom have stepped up to help the younger students with their work. This not only teaches children to work collaboratively but also enables the older children to reflect on and synthesise their own learning. This has certainly set a tone for a very productive year ahead.

Disco Night

How wonderful to begin 2023 with the Disco Night Welcome Event. It was a beautiful night to see our children, parents and graduates come together to enjoy dancing and celebrate the oneness in the community.

Pirate School Excursion

What a fun day! We laughed, giggled, and learnt what it takes to be a pirate. "Coming up with a pirate name was the most fun part of the excursion," said Cai. Lily said, "I enjoyed finding the hidden gems". Albie said he liked the story about Davy Jones's Locker – the mythical resting place of drowned sailors and ships. We all have a pirate name in Gunyah now (including me and Kieran!)

Maths in 6-9

I have parents asking me about Maths in primary. The below quote from Dr Maria Montessori best describes how we facilitate the mathematical mind of a Second Plane child.

"Great creations come from the mathematical mind, so we must always consider all that is mathematical as a means of mental development. It is certain that mathematics organizes the abstract path of the mind, so we must offer it at an early age, in a clear and very accessible manner, as a stimulus to the child whose mind is yet to be organized." – Maria Montessori



Mathematics is like a magic show with an element of surprise, not something that needs to be taught dryly in school. It is the structure of the imagination, the human mathematical mind, and, as with the other subjects, it captures the interest of children and enthralls them.

Maths must be an aid to the natural development of the child. This development is based on the process of the child building and creating for themselves in order to be better adapted to the environment.

The focus in Montessori maths education is not on just getting the right answer, but rather on the process of how an answer is reached and what is discovered along the way. In 6–9 we facilitate children to think, not simply to memorise and forget. They literally learn how to learn, discovering that the process of learning can, and should be, as natural as breathing!

In the Montessori classroom, we focus on children's overall development. Presentations are given to intrigue their imagination, which will allow them to enjoy work across the different

subject areas. Children begin engaging in purposeful work by developing their will, which will lead them to prefer a disciplined task to futile idleness. The choice of doing conscious work in the classroom will prepare and help children develop their self-discipline.

The below quote resonates with my teaching practice and the trust I have in children's potential.

"First, remember they are children. Being a 'student' is only one aspect of their personalities and their needs. Focus on the whole person, not just the student part."
– Chris Trostel

I would like to conclude by saying that the most fulfilling aspect this term has been the moment I look around the room and recognise the synergy that is occurring. The moment everyone is engaged, focus is high, it is as if a beautiful, orchestrated dance is occurring, and I am a lucky observer to witness the magic.

TERM 1 IN 9 – 12

by Leticia Castellanos

Term 1 has been a busy one for Orana and Amaroo. Our students worked very hard on their Ancient Civilisation Project. In small groups or individually, the children chose an ancient culture to undertake their research on this term. They designed different ways to represent the time of their chosen civilisation: some children made ACE/BCE timelines using different sizes, materials and formats; others preferred a 3D timeline using clay figures; and others opted to work using technologies like PowerPoint presentations and mini-movies using the iMovie app.

The students also applied their learning of BOLTSS (Border, Orientation, Legend, Title, Scale and Source) to complete their maps. They also used the Fundamental Human Needs Charts to guide their research and learned so much about the clothing, food, transport, defence, housing and religions of different cultures. Some students also used the Montessori History Questions Charts to guide them and complement their work. They enjoyed creating great models, traditional recipes and mannequins to present all their learning to our parents during the Ancient Civilisation Night.

Camp Snooze

The 9–12 students also had an exciting overnight camp, 'School Snooze', this term. They stayed after school and had refreshments before participating in sports and art activities like tie-dye. They all had a 9–12 barbecue for dinner and watched the movie A Night at the Museum. They enjoyed popcorn and the connections between the film and their history projects. After sleeping over at school, they had a wonderful excursion to the Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre the following day. Using the geographic inquiry process, students investigated the features, human activity and management of Bobbin Head, now and in the past. Each child was supplied with a field journal to record information acquired through various activities, including mapping, fire management assessment and a cultural site visit.

Class Tea

This term we also had our Class Tea, where we had an incredible attendance. We met the 9–12 parents and welcomed the new families in our community. We thank our class parents, Linda Appleyard and Yifat Shirben, for their support this year.



Interrelate Night

Another relevant activity during this term was the Interrelate Night. A significant number of families attended this workshop focused on discussing the male and female reproductive systems, foetal development and the birth process. Personal safety, protective behaviours and the physical changes of puberty were also discussed, emphasising that it can be different for everyone.

Harmony Day

For Harmony Day, a group of Years 5 and 6 children did research and prepared a talk and a poster about the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March. They linked this work with their Montessori Model United Nations topic about racism and used all the quotes researched by the students working on it. They presented their work to all the primary classes.

We commend all our students' efforts and look forward to an excellent and very exciting Term 2.

GOING OUT IN 9 – 12

by Rebecca Grimshaw

“To go out of the classroom to enter the outside world, which includes everything, is obviously to open an immense door to instruction.” – Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence

It is exactly through this immense door, out of the classroom, into the natural and cultural community that Maria Montessori proposed as her concept of ‘Going Out’. Going out is integral to the plan of education that is cosmic education for the elementary years. It relates directly to the tendencies and characteristics of Second Plane children. Interaction within the broader community allows children to see the broader school world, broader components of society, and what possibilities there are for inclusions for them in that society.

Going out is linked to the human pursuit of independence and provides opportunities for the development of responsibility. One of the foundational principles is that in each plane of development different psychological characteristics are manifested. If these are identified and administered to, they will guide us in providing the needed assistance required in each plane of development.

Maria Montessori told us that successive levels must correspond to the successive development in the child. Changes can be profound from one plane of development to another. Since the child has undergone such a dramatic change, it stands to reason that what was appropriate and appealing to a younger child will no longer have the same relevance to the Second Plane child.

The younger child who was interested in the facts of the physical and social world has a grounding in the world of truth and reality. This provides the building blocks that the child’s psyche requires to construct a basic understanding of the world.

The Second Plane child has a different psychic attitude. New psychological characteristics must be addressed and affirmed if development is to continue unimpeded. The How and Why are now the all-consuming questions. These new questions provoke explorations beyond what is and can be known via the senses into what can be understood through reason and the imagination.

The 9–12 child has attained a certain proficiency at manipulating facts and is reaching to find out the reasons behind them. It is not possible for the child physically to find answers to all their burning questions. They cannot experience everything first-hand. Therefore, the reasoning mind and imagination work together to create for the child what cannot be eye-witnessed. Intellectual exploration takes the place of sensorial exploration. Mental order takes precedence over physical order.

While the construction of self continues throughout life, the focus at the Second Plane shifts to a construction of the individual able to participate responsibly in society. It is only through direct observation and interaction within the wider society that the child will recognise how it works and what its components are.



Second Plane children are emerging social beings drawn into a wider field of exploration via their characteristics. They are intensely interested in the world and its workings and find security and stimulation in working and exploring together. They are practising society by creating their own with each other. The family group and peers are enough for the First Plane children, whereas Second Plane children need and require more than the family unit; now they have the psychological characteristic of looking outward to the wider community.

Social development is a Second Plane psychological characteristic: children have the desire to work in groups and, with others, they are creating their small societies and peer groups. They find these groups invigorating. The child is finding their place in the order of the classroom and the wider community. When they find their place, the child will develop soft skills such as confidence, self-reliance, compassion, taking responsibility for themselves and others, and recognising the commitment of their responsibilities. All these soft skills will aid the child throughout their lives and enable them to picture themselves in society and outside.

Second Plane children are offered more freedoms than previously experienced, and gain greater independence. Corresponding responsibilities balance the freedoms. Independence is not just realised in the child's physical abilities, but in the child's mental abilities as well. When children are

provided with the opportunity of going out, they must think for themselves in planning and organising. Preparation and working collaboratively are some of the necessary skills required to plan a successful outing. Going out is just as important as the materials and the presentations. These experiences are equally valued. The role of the adult involves providing the facilities and possibilities for the 9–12 children to go out as these experiences satisfy the children's psychological characteristic of the Reasoning Mind. If the children are not given these opportunities of going out, then their development is presented with obstacles.

When children venture out into their wider communities, they can see the parts of societies working, and the many different contrasting parts of societies. Through their exposure to the world outside of the classroom, the Second Plane child can begin to recognise that they have a role to play in their society, just like everyone else. We can link going out to that pursuit of independence which is a normal tendency of human beings, and it will provide a more significant opportunity for the 9–12 child for more responsibility and awareness of what surrounds them.



We must remember the value that comes from the 9–12 children experiencing reality from going out. The Second Plane children have this desire and curiosity to get outside and explore on a deeper level, and this leads to their development of independence, orientation, order and exploration. Going out is another opportunity for Second Plane children to see law and order and patterns at work, which appeals to their moral development and sense of justice, as well as to their mathematical mind. We are showing practical grace and courtesy activities, such as crossing the street, or how to participate in discussion with people at libraries, museums, on public transport and in theatres in a polite manner.

Going out is an integral part of Cosmic Education, which is unique to Montessori Education. We know that all of the characteristics mentioned above, which are particular to the Second Plane, enable the children’s unique development of self-construction. The children realise their potentials. In Maria Montessori’s words in *From Childhood to Adolescence*: “For the valorisation of the child’s personality, there must be a very definite basis in social experience.”

The Second Plane children know that every living thing makes its contribution to the greater good. When they go out, they observe at a social level what different people do; how people collaborate; and how they communicate with

each other. They will hopefully recognise that every role is equally important, as each role has something to contribute. That recognition and understanding that comes from going out is absorbed by the Second Plane child and brought back to the classroom.

When children go out into the community, they start to think about how society works and how everyone has a part to play.

“We cannot give principles by teaching them, but by prolonged social experience.”
 – *Moral and Social Education, Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Communications*



THE NATURE OF THE ADOLESCENT

by Margaret Kroeger

Who is the adolescent?

Understanding adolescence is a challenge for parents and teenagers alike. Adolescents are nearing that quasi-adult stage of life – having left childhood behind but not yet adult. One moment they're all about Disney movies and Nerf guns, and the next they are stoically reserved or overwhelmed with deep emotions. It can be a confronting, powerful and beautiful rollercoaster ride. So, what did Dr Montessori and related organisations say about this age group?

"...there is a big psychic unrest which is the very representation of what adolescence is all about: mysterious feelings of confusion and power without aim." – Maria Montessori, The Physical and Psychological Development of the Adolescent, in AMI Communications, 2011/1–2, p70

"In the same way that the little child is very sensitive to all sensorial impressions, light, colour, touch, etc., this child [adolescent] becomes sensitive to other people's opinions of him." – Maria Montessori, The Adolescent — A 'Social Newborn', in AMI Communications, 2011/1–2, p75

"From a psychological point of view also this is a critical age. There are doubts and hesitations, violent emotions, discouragements and an unexpected decrease in intellectual capacity. (...) The

chief symptom of adolescence is a state of expectation, a tendency towards creative work and a need for the strengthening of self-confidence." – Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence, Montessori-Pierson, 2011

"...This most essential and critical period of the human soul, the period in which the conscience is developed and the need for a spiritual life is felt most intensely." – Maria Montessori, La insztituzione degli 'Erdkinder' or The Curriculum for the 'Erdkinder' School, in AMI Communications, 2011/1-2, p64

Clearly, Montessori acknowledged the tumultuous nature of adolescence, while remaining in awe of the tremendous growth that is happening internally and externally. She recognised that adolescents were people in the sacred process of creation. She coined this age group 'social newborns', as their mission was to create a new self, suited to society. Montessori believed that adolescents **needed protection** due to their vulnerabilities. She maintained that schools should be **open and affirming places where new levels of independence could be fostered.**



Dr Montessori maintained that adolescents need:

- adults that have faith and trust in them as evolving individuals
- opportunities to make mistakes, make amends, try experiences outside their comfort zones and contribute to their adolescent community of peers
- time away from the classroom and families
- rich opportunities to combine work of the mind with work of the body
- opportunities to develop greater functional independence (doing more for themselves – cleaning, cooking, etc.)
- opportunities to participate in community life – to feel capable and a sense of belonging
- help to understand how society works
- time and support to connect deeply and to work collaboratively within a real world context
- opportunities to be creative and self-reflective
- opportunities to explore the many facets of identity and to see themselves through many lenses
- interaction with a rich variety of adults so they can absorb what it means to be an 'adult'

- time to follow their interests
- learning that is lived and experienced, not just studied in a textbook.

Dr Montessori recognised that adolescents have a sensitivity for justice and a deep need for their personal dignity to be acknowledged. They want to be seen as mature. They care deeply about the opinions of peers and may take risks for social reward. They can be:

- egocentric
- sensitive
- capable
- full of doubt
- exuberant
- fearless.

They are the trailblazers and rebels who will shape our future.

So how do we take these development needs of the adolescent and apply them to our program at Northside?

1. Adolescents have a need to be social. They are drawn to their peer group and have an intense need to socialise and collaborate. At Northside we support this by building in:

- opportunities for small-group and pair collaborative academic tasks
- peer editing and peer mentoring
- regular community meetings
- seminars
- community meals
- collaborative whole-class projects, such as design and revamping of the side yard space
- camps
- excursions
- outdoor group physical activity
- service learning, such as our bush regeneration
- conferencing
- having a classroom that has an open plan with flexible seating that is easy to change to facilitate group interaction.

2. Adolescents have a strong sense of justice. This sense of justice encompasses personal justice as well as social, environmental and economic justice. Adolescents have a compulsion to fight for what is right and to speak in support of others. At Northside, we accommodate and encourage this by:

- embedding restorative justice protocols
- holding regular community meetings
- engaging in activities that address social justice, such as Montessori Model United Nations and the Youth Impact Forum
- including texts that explore justice
- creating a code of civility with the students
- holding seminars.

3. Adolescents have a need for independence, including economic independence. The goal of Montessori Adolescent education is the achievement of new levels of independence and maturity. This is supported by:

- explicit teaching of life skills such as cooking, laundering of clothes etc.

- providing opportunities for self-reflection, self-assessment and agency in project choices, group selection, planning of camps etc.
- students facilitating their own meetings (this includes parent/student/teacher interviews, business meetings, daily morning class meetings, and weekly community meetings to discuss concerns, successes, upcoming events etc.)
- the incorporation of peer mentoring and peer teaching
- encouragement of students to make their own phone calls, arrangements, schedules and agendas
- establishment of student-driven micro-economies like Planet Pens
- giving students true agency with their business model, including decision-making on expenditure, profit etc.
- moving beyond the classroom, such as service learning
- care of the environment, plants and animals
- care of each other (gratitude circles, positive thinking activities etc.).





4. Adolescents have a need for work, with the work of hands tied in with work of the mind. The adolescent benefits from work that is both academic and physical – especially if it originates from a need within the community. They need opportunities to express their ideas, explain how their opinions are supported by a text or situation, and to experiment in their learning. At Northside this is achieved by:

- regular opportunities for student presentation of work to peers
- Socratic seminars
- practical links to theory and academic learning – such as creating flower beds based on Pythagoras triplets or studying the carbon cycle to solve why the fish are dying in our aquaponics system
- inviting visiting experts to share in their practical work experiences (this year we have been visited by a design architect, a farmer, a lawyer and several CEOs)
- incorporation of History Simulations (such as our work on the medieval period, where each student had a role in the feudal system)
- use of science inquiry protocols (such as Year 8's study of force and motion and Newton's Laws as they applied to an egg being launched into a wall on the back of a toy car with a protective device designed by the students)

- excursions to real examples and contexts (including our trip to New Zealand in September to study Māori culture, Māori astronomy, New Zealand biomes and geothermal activity, and our trip to Crookwell to study Indigenous science and farming practices and sustainable agriculture of the area).

We feel so fortunate to be part of this Adolescent Program, not only for the way it supports adolescent development but also for the way it engages the adolescent – giving them such agency in their learning. We get to be witness to their great transformation into empowered and proactive young adults.

“The children of today will make all the discoveries of tomorrow. All the discoveries of mankind will be known to them, and they will improve what has been done and make fresh discoveries. They must make all the improvements in houses, cities, communication, methods of production, etc. that are to be made. The future generation must not only know how to do what we can teach them, they must be able to go a step further.” – Maria Montessori, The 1946 London Lectures, p140 (emphasis added)

STORY: A DAY WITHOUT FRICTION

by Arturo Castellanos

There he stood, his feet on the ground, but somehow not entirely there. Confused, he took a step, realising soon that it had not been his brightest idea since the clock.

Now, he had gotten up earlier to the morning sun for school, and like any ordinary boy, he woke up late. Annoyed by the alarm clock that he seriously considered taking back to the store, he'd slammed on it to stop the infernal ringing. Instead of plopping on the aquatic-blue carpet like it deserved, it slid against the carpet like a skater on ice. It kept going, bouncing around the room, non-stop.

"Now," he thought, "that was weird." Struggling to get up, he looked around for grip. Finding one of my bed's bars, he grabbed it, or at least tried.

His hand slipped off like a bar of soap. Staring at his hand, he tried again, and failed. Then, he tried sliding to the ground, and it worked! Although it felt nothing like how he slid out of bedsheets, and believe it, he did it all the time. Finally, he got one foot down, followed by the other.

"I'm standing, so what now?"

He looked out his window, seeing the worst. Drivers went frantic as cars skidded around and bumped into one another. No scraping metal sound, no skidding of wheels, just crashes, and thumps. They would then bounce out in opposite directions once they hit.

In the sky, though, the planes seemed fine. Soaring majestically through the powerful winds.

Back to himself, he took that step, and fell. He should have stopped but he kept sliding and bumped himself on his white, speckled door.

"Alright, how do I do this?" he asked. Stomping one foot, he hoped it would stay. And it did! Up went the other, and he was back on, standing.

He had to get some explanation for this. It felt like something was missing.

Upon getting up in bed, he had heard a strange clattering noise in the kitchen, followed by knocks and bumps of who knew what.

"I have a feeling I'm not the only one experiencing this", he muttered softly as he stayed there, staring at his door.

Figuring out how to step without tumbling, he stomped on the floor, and almost fell again.

"If I can't walk, what's the point?" He asked angrily. He looked at his door, eyeing it suspiciously. Surely it would open, right?

He pushed his door, and nothing gave way. The thing that did give way, was his feet.

They slid flawlessly and smoothly across the wooden floor until he bumped against his bed. He pushed back against his bed and came back to the door.

"I think I get it now!" He said confidently. He had remembered his teacher showing him some things about something called... not fiction... friction! Yes! That was it! So maybe something to do with its absence.

"But how?" He creased his eyebrows and thought. "Nothing in the news, nothing special... So how? How had he woken up to this?" Then came his worrying thoughts.

"What if the world stays like this? What if the world never comes back to how it was before?"

No, it had to come back.

Determined, he looked around for a way to get his door to open. Thoughts came by:

"Push it again! Throw something big at the door! Punch the door until it cracks!" But he knew none of these would work. Then, he got it. When he had pushed the door trying to get it open, he'd slid to the other side of his room. So if he barged onto the door by pushing from the bed with his full strength, he might accomplish it.

He looked at his hands, then at the door. He was no physics teacher, but his door was pretty old, some cracks and grooves here and there.

"Here I go."

He pushed off his door and slid back to his bed. His feet swiftly sliding against the floor, and he hit the bed yet again.

"One... two..." he prepared himself... "Three!" he shouted as he shoved the bed with his full force and came blasting towards the door. Smash! He hit his door and heard the groaning and cracking of metal and wood, from that he knew it had worked. Suddenly, the bolts came loose, and he went tumbling onto the ground with the door on his chest. Immediately, he heard a static-like sound. Something was making this weird, sort of buzzing sound.

As he looked around, he saw bits of wood and undone bolts come out sliding everywhere, like a current sweeping everything out and into the sea. That's when he realised that a sea always has boulders, and he hit his head against the counter of the kitchen. Hearing that strange static noise as he drifted off...

"Baa baa black sheep, have you any wool? Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full! Sing with me! Baa baa black sheep..." He slowly opened his eyes to find that he was still bouncing around the house, but he was no longer on the door. How long was he out for? He could hear a noise, like singing, but hazy. Where had the buzzing noise gone? What would make that kind of sound?... AHA! It had to be the tv. It was making a buzzing, out-of-signal sound, but now it was connected. Apparently, it was on a kids' channel, he could tell by the song. "One for the master, one for the dame..."

"Aargh! What have I done to deserve this?!"

Still bouncing around the kitchen, wincing as he knocked his head over and over, he noticed bits of the door and the same pieces of wood and bolts.

"Why, is, everything, as, slippery, as, ICE!!!" He exclaimed as he hit his head and feet again on the same counter and cupboard.

Thinking of how to escape, a jolt of pain hit his head as his feet bounced wrong, hitting a cupboard handle. Seeing the cupboard handle, he grabbed it, but it slipped off, again.

"Ooooh, right." he remembered. He came back down, bounced off his feet, and this time he hooked his arm on, and it held.

For the third time today, he rose to his feet but still held desperately to the handle.

"How could I survive this? How could anyone survive this?" A huge memory flash suddenly came to him, something as important as a new discovery.

Those days when he played on the ice, with his shiny, new skates and his happy, happy smile. The days where he was taught how to stabilise on such a slippery surface, a slippery surface such, as, this! What hit him though, is that his memories felt manipulated, almost computed, but why?

He held the hook on the cupboard handle tight, slowly taking his arm out. His feet slid and moved tiny fractions but stayed in place. he took his whole arm out, and he stayed, too frightened, too shaken. He saw his kitchen door, which led to the backyard.

Slowly but surely, he could find a way out! He remembered his survival book, the one he used to read all the time when he was little. It told him all the ways to survive disasters.

"But I bet it never thought of THIS one." He could hear soft, crackling sounds from far away, almost like fire. It followed by a thundering whoosh, and then another, and another, and another. Were those... houses? Could they be falling apart? He could hear that same, cracking noise, in his own house.

"I can't be distracted," he thought instinctively.

"I have to go."

Frantic, he thought and thought. He thought harder than ever before. But nothing came, nothing useful enough, not one thing that could get him out of the house. Then he realised,

"Don't I have parents?" He had never thought of that since he awoke. Everything was weird, everything was mixed up. But he didn't have time to think anymore, because without any warning, the kitchen roof fell.

Particles of dust and grime from the old, yellow wallpaper collided with the white porcelain of the kitchen bench. Bits and pieces everywhere. Pans went flying and cooking tools scattered on the floor. The propane tanks flew free from the stove, and he barely dodged one that flew straight for him. Everything was sliding, sliding on grass, which shouldn't happen. It was almost beautiful, that moment where everything slid in perfect fashion.

That is, until he saw in the direction of the current.

A huge, if not massive, crack in the ground. He could remember what his teacher had told him.

"Friction holds everything together. Without it, Earth would become a featureless blob." He knew then there was no way out. Slowly, everything slipped and fell, into the crack below. What used to be his backyard, was now his doom.

Everything came to him. His life, his belongings, especially his prized ones. But it all felt fake. So incredibly fake, he couldn't resist.

"Is it all fake?!" he shouted. "Is it all so fake, I can't even remember my name?!" His name, HIS NAME! he can't even remember his name! He looked down, almost everything had now fallen in the crack, which seemed to go on for ever. He accumulated all his courage and put it in a cage, so it couldn't escape.

"This is it." he thought. His feet neared the cliff, closed in slowly, slowly, until... It all happened so suddenly, everything flashing before his eyes. His hands ready to grasp, one more time, but he knew it would never work. His arm extended, reached toward the soil, and he dug his fingers as hard as he could. Friction resumed, and he was able to hold on.

Dangling from the cliff edge, he carefully hauled himself up, sitting down on the grass, rubbing his head.

Looking around, he spotted all the rubble that he had surfed on. Now it all stayed still, unmoving. And he liked it like that. Back at his house, he saw the walls relax, and on the one kitchen wall that didn't break, was a picture. With him, and his parents.

Although they weren't there, he could feel their warmth right next to him.

He looked up, at the sky. It was now evening, with the sun setting in the mountains.

The ground gave a jump, which startled him. He saw a speck, a dot in the sky, like if a bit of it was gone. It got bigger and bigger, wiping out everything as it came, straight for him.

Voices filled his head, in the midst, an electronic voice said, 'simulation complete'. Looking around, expecting to see people, he heard mumbling here and there, like a room full of people. Before he could shout out, or give out a signal, he was gone, along with the world.

"Wadda ya say David? Wrap it up for the night?" said one of the few scientists that were only half-awake from their coffee. "Yeah, although it would be safe to check the notification centre, it is a quantum computer, after all." As he scrolled down on his phone, he saw an irregular note: 'humanoid 1472 with unregularized consciousness.' He scrunched up his nose, "It must be nothing." David thought as he wrapped up his final pieces.

Upon walking out the office, which was now empty as the tired scientists went back to their homes, he slowly closed the big iron doors. And as he walked away, one sound, one word, echoed around the disconnected speakers; "what's my name?".

MUSIC AT NORTHSIDE IN 2023

by Marilyn Williams



2023 at Northside has started full of music. We have had new enrolments in the instrumental programs (violin, piano, guitar, flute, saxophone and clarinet), along with welcoming new members into our Choir, Band and Senior Instrumental Group. We have had our first Soiree and we will now prepare for our Annual Music Concert in July.

Like everything, the ability to learn music is not limited to what is experienced in a classroom or with a teacher. Many students have been watching tutorials online and working out tunes that they hear in movies, games, memes or TV shows.

Live lessons help the children with direction in correct technique and holistic understanding. It is lovely to see so many children with such enthusiasm to play and to learn, and while it is important to supervise online usage, the students who have been accessing these tutorials are

often reassured by feeling like they are able to work these pieces out themselves.

I am often aware of students who listen to a wide variety of music at home as it influences their wider listening and choices of music in class. With the older students I encourage them to share some of their favourite music with the class. It has been so good to hear music from different cultures and time periods being shared as well.

Please feel free to email me if you have any music-related enquiries on Marilyn.
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OOSH NEWS: BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE AND HOLIDAY PROGRAM

by Surendrini Giritharan (OOSH Coordinator)

It has been an exciting and busy start to the year at our OOSH (Out of School Hours) program, with a number of new children joining us in the first week. We extend a warm welcome to all our new families and their children, as well as to our returning families.

We are pleased to report that the start of the year has been smooth and successful for all the children, including our new 3-year-olds who have settled in well to our program and are enjoying getting to know their peers. For those new to our program, we would like to provide you with an update on what we do in our Before and After School Care (BSC and ASC) and Holiday Program.

Our BSC program starts at 7:30am with a healthy breakfast served according to each child's dietary requirements, including those with allergies and special dietary needs. Our morning program includes group activities, games, story time, and free play until children go to their classrooms.

In the afternoons, we have a variety of engaging activities planned for the children, including a brief "Silent Sitting" meditation practice followed by a "Brain Yoga" session. We also provide a healthy and nut-free afternoon tea, with the menu changed regularly based on the children's preferences. Our daily activity is based on the week's theme, including cooking on Thursdays (starting from Term 2). Children also have time for

story time, group games, free play, and outdoor play.

All our activities are designed to promote brain development, confidence, creativity, and social and emotional wellbeing, while reinforcing respect, fairness, and diversity. We encourage all children to take part in all activities, and parents can view our weekly program sheet on the OOSH room notice board. Our staff are always available to address any concerns or questions parents may have, and we also conduct termly observations of each child individually and in group situations.

At our OOSH program, safety and hygiene are paramount, and we fill out a task sheet every day to ensure that all activities are performed with utmost safety and hygiene. We also celebrate cultural events throughout the year, including Chinese New Year, Easter, Deepavali, and Christmas.

As a reminder, for children to participate in our program, they should be fully toilet trained. Any occasional accidents are acceptable, but please ensure that children are fully trained before booking them into our OOSH and holiday programs.



Our holiday program runs from 8am-6pm and includes a variety of incursions and activities to create interest, learning, and excitement. It is important that parents provide enough food for morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea, as well as a labelled water bottle and hat. Outside time is scheduled in the morning and afternoon, weather permitting, and we provide sunscreen for all children during outside time. Parents are also welcome to provide their own labelled sunscreen for their child.

We are proud to have a wonderful group of qualified and energetic staff who work hard to ensure the program runs smoothly. If any parent has concerns about staff members, please raise these with Adam, the Principal.

We look forward to seeing you in Term 2 and during our future holiday programs. Booking forms are available on the SkoolBag app.







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