

Now this winter is coming to a close (no more hats, gloves, and scarves to keep up with!), and spring is upon us. We have a big week coming up before spring break (March 25 - 29th) celebrating two five-year-old birthdays! We have also had many people coming to observe the class (and would welcome any others you may want to send our way), and each observer goes away with a wonderful experience due to your beautiful children and their industrious activities.

Many children are learning lessons of practical life. Each week the families who so graciously send in beautiful snacks also send in a bunch of flowers. This week I showed our two new students how to do flower arranging - one of my many favorite presentations. The practical life lessons, such as flower arranging, are a way for very young children to contribute to the beauty and cleanliness of our environment, while also strengthening their independence, concentration and control of movement. The topic of purposeful work is a common term one hears in the Montessori world. My wish is that each family think about their children, themselves, and any elderly family members and what opportunities are available for them to do purposeful work. The importance of this becomes more apparent to me each day. I am hopeful to get people thinking about purposeful work and the emotional strength one attains from all forms, large or small, regardless of age.

The sensorial lessons have been heavily used recently. One boy collected all geometric solids (think cone, cube, cylinder...) and felt their attributes while learning the language. Several of the four-year-old boys that are attempting (with my guidance) to strengthen their pencil grips, have been cutting out the shapes of the geometry cabinet and making posters. This requires use of scissors, a great way to assist with precise hand movements while strengthening the muscles of the hand. There has been a wave of work matching height and diameter with knobless cylinders, and much comparison of materials including the cubes of the pink tower and the prisms of the broad stair. It was also a pleasure introducing work with a blindfold - one student was so excited it made my day! Once the children work with the sensorial lessons repeatedly, they can actually build them while wearing a blindfold!

This week you saw a picture of me "labeled" in the newsletter. Reading children are labeling the environment, learning high-frequency words, and reading phonetic commands. If you watch the class and there is a child "skipping to the library to fetch a book" don't think they are misbehaving - they read that command and are following directions! The funnier the commands, the more the children want to read them, of course. Those not yet reading are all working toward it. Some children tracing sandpaper letters (in cursive) and some working with movable alphabets (around four years of age). All children are playing sound games to learn about word units being made up of sounds. Children also read equations and labels of the number chains and other various math lessons.

Counting is amazing! At any given time kids might be playing bank, counting number chains (the seven cubed chain has children counting to 343 and reading the labels by 7's! - each long number chain is the length of that number cubed), doing multiplication with multiplication bead bars, and laying out the tiles of the hundred board. The oldest kids are just finishing up a few weeks of measurement and have done extensive introduction of inches, centimeters, thermometers, clocks, calendars, fractions, and are now heavily into counting money. Children are still expected to know what coins are, penny, nickel, dime and quarter, but experience money in the real world very

infrequently due to debit and credit cards. Please make sure your child experiences transactions using coins so they see what their purpose is.

So, next we will speak specifically about your child at parent teacher conferences following spring break on April 8th. School will be closed that day to accommodate parent meetings, but there will be childcare offered during the time you meet with me. Please sign up for your conference using the following link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0D4EACAB29A5FF2-mrs>

Sincerely,

Carrie