

President's Corner

Dear Montessori friends!

In Michigan, looking forward to spring helps us get through the last of the ice, snow, cold and dreary days. In our classrooms, it is a time of great work and discovery as we look forward to guiding our children on to challenging and interesting activities. The Michigan Montessori Society is also looking forward.

This April at Macomb Community College we will be welcoming Andrea Fleener. She will be speaking on "From Concrete to Abstract." She will talk about the beginnings with concrete, hands on activities and how these activities are the foundation for abstract thought as the children develop and progress. It will be a great way for all of us to see how Montessori develops with the children. We hope to see you there.

The board continues to advocate for Montessori in Michigan, looking forward not just for spring, but supporting the Montessori community for many years to come. Our goal is to give Montessori a voice in and respect from the educational community and the State of Michigan. We hope you are ready to help us work for recognition and acceptance of the Montessori philosophy as an amazing and successful way to support the education and development of children.

The offering of Mini-Workshops is a great way to reinforce our sense of community and get to know other Montessorians. Please consider attending or even hosting a Mini-Workshop at your school. The strength of our community is important as we look forward. We know there are many great ideas and opportunities available in our community. We would love to have your input.

Dr. Montessori often and in many ways has reminded us ..."Within the child lies the fate of the future." Let us all work together for a brighter future for children through the support of Montessori in Michigan.
Heidi Gauger

MMS
Spring
Workshop
Apr. 13, 8:00-1
Macomb
Community
College

Michigan Montessori Board of Directors 2018-19

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MMEAN Update

Michigan Montessori Education Advocacy Network is working for YOU!

by Sue Fitzpatrick

MMEAN's Mission Statement:

"We advocate for the validation and advancement of authentic Montessori education in Michigan."

This group of passionate volunteers has been busy working on behalf of all of you in the greater Michigan Montessori community to ensure that Montessori programs are included in and protected by any legislation and regulation that will impact them.

Members from the state offices of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation and Great Start to Quality reached out to MMEAN advocacy group member Susie Hyatt to set up a meeting to discuss Montessori schools' experience with the Preschool Quality Assessment rating scale revision trials. They will be meeting on February 7. She will be meeting with Nicole Kretchmer, Assessment Manager for Quality at the Early Childhood Investment Corporation, Melissa Mosley, Validation Manager for Great Start to Quality, and Barb Monroe, Program Director, ESA Great Start to Quality Central Resource Center.

Sue Fitzpatrick has corresponded with Jeffrey Beal, Senior Research Scientist at HighScope Center for Early Education Research and Evaluation, in late November after attending the October MPPI retreat in Alexandria, VA. We learned that HighScope had also joined the Ideal Learning Roundtable, along with Montessori Public Policy Initiative, and are happy about the collaboration. The Ideal Learning Roundtable <https://trustforlearning.org/example/ideal-learning-roundtable/> works to amplify the voice of early childhood education providers that embrace a shared set of principles, to ensure that what works best for children and families is represented in policy and practice. The Ideal Learning Roundtable is supported by The Trust for Learning, <https://trustforlearning.org/who-we-are/> a funding collaborative that has sponsored research in early childhood programs, including the Riley Study that worked with Angeline Lillard to establish that public Montessori preschool elevates performance and equalizes outcomes for all children. <https://trustforlearning.org/assets/F BF LillardSummary 013018.pdf>

Do take a look at NCMPS Communication Director David Ayer's live demo here <https://www.ders-app.org/live-demo/> to familiarize yourselves with the Montessori classroom friendly Developmental Environmental Rating Scale. This is an assessment tool that is being used and reviewed more favorably by some Montessori training centers and NCMPS."

It's Not Too Early to Plan for.....MMS Fall Seminar – Best Practices

MMS is looking for presenters for breakout sessions at the "Best Practices" workshop next fall, Oct 12, 2019. If you know of someone you think would offer your colleagues a fresh perspective, new information, or an interesting topic, please contact the MMS board. The workshop will be held at Weber's Inn in Ann Arbor again. We have some sessions planned, but there's room for more! Send us your ideas!



*Michigan Montessori Society
Spring Workshop presents...*

Registration online at MMSOC.ORG



**From Concrete to Abstract –
How to Prepare**

with Andrea Fleener

Andrea Fleener is the Executive Director and Director of Elementary Training at the Montessori Institute of Milwaukee. Andrea holds AMI diplomas at both the 6-12 and 3-6 levels. She has a B.A. in Germanic Languages and Literatures from the University of Kansas and a M.Ed in Montessori Education from Loyola University in Maryland.

Andrea has over 10 years of teaching experience as an AMI trained lead guide, in 6-9, 6-12 and 9-12 age groupings. She has served on various Montessori task forces and is a past chair of the AMI-EAA board of directors. Andrea has worked with the staffs of public and private Montessori schools and has lectured at AMI courses and offered workshops around the world. Andrea enjoys cooking, canning, sewing and listening to music.

**April 13
8:00 – 1:00
Macomb Community
College
14500 E 12 Mile Rd.
Warren, MI 48088**

While we know that the work in the 3 to 6 class is essential and foundational to the child's development, we typically think of this in terms of independence and the executive function skills. We know that the lessons offered are academically appropriate to the age of the child, but we do not always see the hidden fruits of the child's labor. The field for learning, as it were, is prepared, but we might not see the plant burst forth. In this workshop, we will look at how specific presentations in the primary environment are built upon and expanded in the elementary years and will explore how the child moves toward the abstraction of concepts in each area of study. Understanding how the flowers eventually bloom will help us in the 3 – 6 classes have a better understanding of the lessons we share with our children and may help to us to fine tune our presentations.

MMS Mini Workshops ~ ~A New Offering for MMS Members Only!

The MMS board is offering a new type of workshop for its members. These **MMS Minis** will offer short, single topic presentations by local early childhood experts on a broad range of subjects concerning young children. Make & Take workshops designed to help you create materials for your classrooms will also be a focus. The Make & Takes will offer a specific work each session and will include a materials charge for laminating (hard and soft) and card stock, should you choose those options.

The workshops will take place on Tuesdays from 6:30 – 7:30 or 8:00. The events will be held in schools, giving members an opportunity to browse through the classrooms, gather ideas, as well as mingle and network with other Montessorians. Certificates of continuing education credits for 1 or 1.5 hours will help you fulfill the State requirements. The cost is \$10 per person and includes a light snack. Registration is required as there will be limited space for these workshops.

Our first MMS Mini took place in January (see following article) and the evaluations from the attendees indicated that they want more Minis! We hope to bring these presentations to a school near you! If you're interested in opening your school to one of these events, please contact Karen Lumsden (See MMS Board listings). If you have a topic you'd like to see addressed at Mini, bring it to our attention. We hope that these opportunities will benefit our membership and give us all an opportunity to network with other Montessorians in an atmosphere of collegial support.

MMS Mini Workshops ~ ~A Great First Start

The first MMS Mini Workshop was offered to MMS Members on January 15. Approximately 18 MMS members attended an hour long workshop on Sensory Integration and Behavior in the Classroom given by Jessica Ravineala, an Occupational Therapist and co owner of The Therapy SPOT in Farmington. (see following article). In addition to yummy snacks, and important information, the attendees earned 1 hour of continuing education credit.



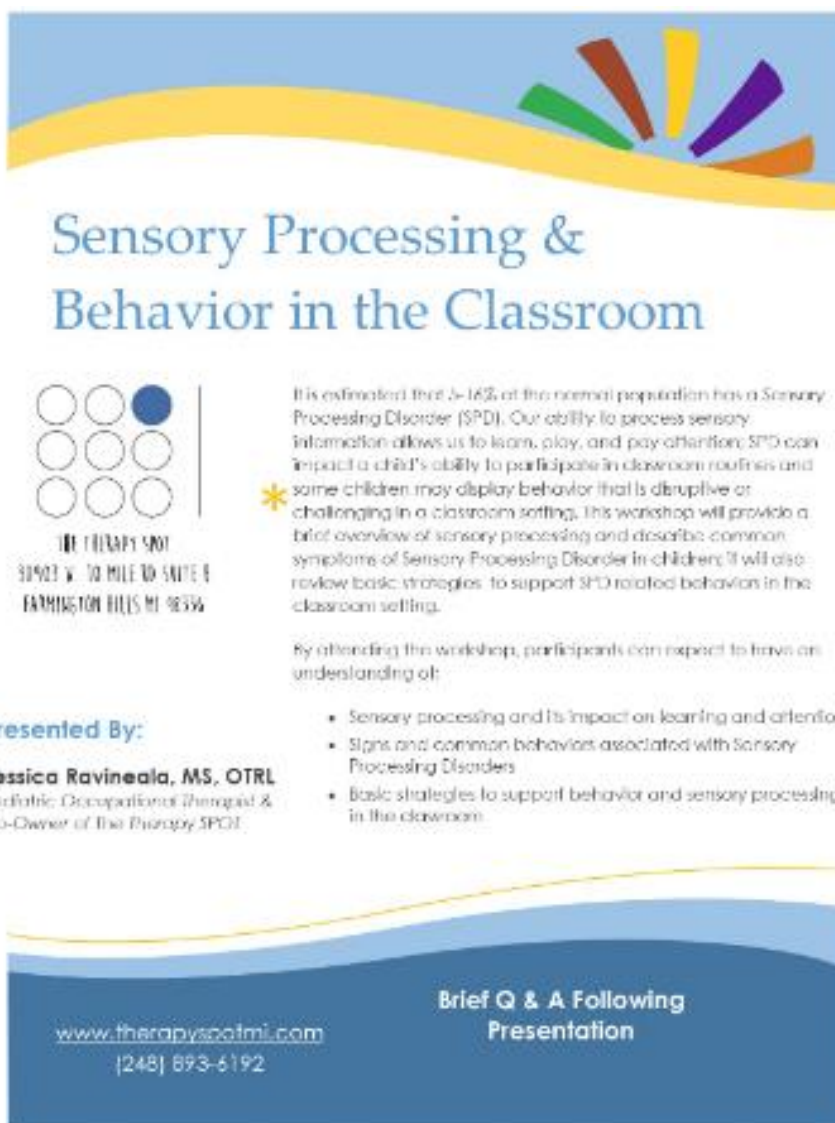
As this was our first such event, we were not sure how it would be received by our membership. It soon became apparent with the number of reservations and last minute add ons that this type



of event is welcomed by MMS members. Several attendees came early to leisurely walk through the classrooms and look at the materials. The discussion, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation and handouts, was well-planned, well-delivered and well-received. A lively question and answer session afterward showed us that this information had a great deal of interest to those in attendance.

We were very encouraged by the success of this first MMS Mini and are actively planning the second one that will hopefully take place soon.

Future events may include speakers or offer members opportunities to make materials for their classrooms. Members will be invited via email, so make sure MMS administrative assistant, Kathy Smoko, has your current email. (Kathy@mmsoc.org)



Sensory Processing & Behavior in the Classroom

THE THERAPY SPOT
30423 W. 70 MILE RD SUITE 8
FARMINGTON HILLS MI 48334

It is estimated that 5-16% of the normal population has a Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD). Our ability to process sensory information allows us to learn, play, and pay attention. SPD can impact a child's ability to participate in classroom routines and some children may display behavior that is disruptive or challenging in a classroom setting. This workshop will provide a brief overview of sensory processing and describe common symptoms of Sensory Processing Disorder in children. It will also review basic strategies to support SPD related behavior in the classroom setting.

By attending this workshop, participants can expect to have an understanding of:

- Sensory processing and its impact on learning and attention
- Signs and common behaviors associated with Sensory Processing Disorders
- Basic strategies to support behavior and sensory processing in the classroom

Brief Q & A Following Presentation

www.therapyspotmi.com
(248) 893-6192

Behavior & Sensory Processing

by Jessica Ravineala

Sensory Processing refers to our ability to take in sensations, organize and interpret them in order to make sense of our world, pay attention, and learn.

As occupational therapists, we view behavior as communication. A child's behavior provides us insight into how his or her brain is processing information from the environment. Problem behaviors at home and school may indicate a sensory processing issue or difficulty with regulation. While there are many reasons for a particular behavior, it is important to assume the behavior serves some purpose for the child rather than assume it has a malicious intent; when we can do this, we can better identify the underlying issues and truly help to support the child's development in a meaningful way.

**Behavior is
communication
– what is it
telling you?**

**Sensory Processing refers
to our ability to take in
sensations, organize and
interpret them in order to
make sense of our world,
pay attention, and learn.**

All day long, we are constantly taking in various sensations through our skin, ears, eyes, and our body. For most of us, we aren't even aware of it. We can quickly ignore sensory information that we don't need and focus our attention on the information that we need to learn. When a child's sensory systems aren't working just right, it can impact his or her ability to function.

Children with sensory processing issues may be more sensitive to certain sensations, have trouble detecting sensations, or crave certain sensations more than others. They may have trouble learning new motor tasks, difficulty with fine motor, gross motor, or speech development, be picky eaters, or may be more easily frustrated or upset.

Tactile System

The tactile system or sense of touch provides us with information with light touch, vibration, temperature, and pain. It helps us learn to differentiate textures and temperature and know which touch is dangerous, pleasurable, which touch needs attention and which can be ignored. Our tactile system allows us to discriminate between different objects and is crucial to development of fine motor and handwriting skills. Children who have difficulty interpreting and processing tactile input may avoid messy hands, be insensitive to pain or temperature, seek touch, have an aggressive response to touch, become irritated by certain types of clothing, or have difficulty standing in line.

**There are 8
sensory systems:
Tactile,
Proprioception,
Vestibular,
Auditory, Visual,
Taste, Smell, and
Interoception**

Proprioceptive System

Our proprioceptive system is activated when muscles are contracted against resistance such as during 'heavy work', exercise, deep pressure, and stretching. This system provides us with information about the position of our body in space. Children who have difficulty interpreting or processing proprioceptive input may tend to fatigue easily, have poor endurance, appear clumsy, intentionally crash or fall, be physically rough during play or other tasks, and have eased safety awareness.

Vestibular System

Our vestibular system or our movement sense provides us with information about gravity, balance, speed. It detects changes in our head position through receptors located in our middle ear and can make us feel "dizzy". Children who have difficulty interpreting or processing vestibular input may have decreased safety awareness, poor balance, demonstrate fear of heights, avoid movement activities, seek movement often, or be impulsive.

Know a child who may have sensory processing concerns? A sensory processing evaluation by an occupational therapist is recommended. Treatment can improve function and recommendations can be made for home and school. Questions? Contact us! (248) 893-6192 Info@therapyspotmi.com

Auditory System

Our auditory system provides us with information about our environment through sound. It allows us to localize sound, discriminate between different sounds and frequencies, and ignore or filter out background noises from foreground sound in order to pay attention. Children who have difficulty processing auditory input may hold their hands over their ears in response to sound, appear to not hear what is said or not respond to their name when called, appear oblivious in busy environments, or have difficulty with background noise or loud, unexpected sounds.

Visual System

Our visual system allows us to interpret visual information and supports our ability to read, write, and play catch. It provides us with depth perception and visual perceptual skills (ex: puzzles). It allows us to see near and far, and follow moving objects. Children with difficulty interpreting visual information may be bothered by bright lights, look away from tasks frequently, have difficulty finding objects in a messy drawer, avoid eye contact, hesitate on steps or curbs, or have difficulty with reading, writing, or ball skills.

Interoception System

Our interoception system provides us information about our internal state and our emotional state. For example, it identifies our need to use the bathroom, get a drink of water, or take a break when physically exhausted. It also helps us identify our emotions such as mad, frustrated, or sad. Children who have difficulty with interoceptive awareness may have frequent bathroom accidents or may use the bathroom too frequently, may need reminders to eat food or drink water, may have difficulty calming down when they are upset or identifying their emotions, may not know or be able to describe when they get hurt or are sick, or may be overly sensitive to pain or temperature.

Montessori Education Week ~ Feb 24 ~ March 2, 2019

Montessori Education Week is coming up Feb. 24 – March 2, 2019. Planning events for this celebration of Montessori's gifts to the education of young children gives us an opportunity to share her life's work with our communities. Many of you will create unique experiences for your schools and we would love to hear about them. We will offer a few suggestions here and hope that they may inspire you to produce an event that will be meaningful to your students.

❖ *Create a time line of Maria Montessori's life.*



1870
Maria
was born in
Chiaravalle,
Italy
on August 31



1882
Entered
secondary
technical
school



1890
Entered University of
Rome to study
engineering



1892
Entered medical
school
Univ. of Rome



1896
Graduated
Medical
School.



1896
Began working with
mentally
handicapped children &
worked for equal
rights for women



1898
Mario Montessori
was born



1902
Began
graduate study
in psychology



1907
Opened
Casa
Bambini



1913
Traveled to U.S.
Met with
Hellen Keller.
Thomas Edison
& Alexander Graham
Bell & his wife,
Mabel



1913-1938
Traveled Europe
& the U.S. giving
lectures and
publishing books
on her education
methods



1931
Traveled to
India to
escape
World War II



1936
Traveled to
Amsterdam
with her
son,
Mario



1949
Lectured on
peace.
Nominated
Nobel
Peace Prize



1950 & 1951
Nominated
For Nobel
Peace Prize



1952
Maria
Montessori
died in
Holland at
age 81



Casa Bambini

❖ *Focus on Montessori's goal of world peace.*

- Help the children ponder what it means to be peaceful.
- Describe the qualities that make a person peaceful. Discuss ways to become a peaceful person
- Create a peace pole using words the children offer as elements of peace.
- Using the word PEACE or PEACEFUL, have the children think of words beginning with each letter that encourage peace. Ex. P – patient, polite, E – empathy, encouragement, A – accepting, appropriate C – caring, considerate
E – equality, enduring F – friendly, fair U – understanding, upbeat L – loving, likable
- Add to the children's "peace" vocabulary. Introduce words and concepts.
- Discuss "sounds" or "colors" that help the children feel peaceful.
- Help the children experience deep breathing to calm themselves and bring inner peace.
- Create a labyrinth for the children to walk through peacefully
- Create a peace "blanket" using a marker to write words the children suggest on a plain blanket. Could be used in the peace corner to give comfort to the children when needed.
- Explore the sense of touch or hearing to discover how it might provide a calming effect.
- Introduce poetry that encourages a calm, peaceful feeling.
- Share poems about peace and help the children create poetry about peace

Childrens smile,
Flowers blossom,
Sunlight shine into our window.
Smiles gone,
Flowers withered away,
Gloom fills the day.
Let's keep peace in the world,
So Happiness stays.
— Hua Jing

Peace *by Sama Elamin*

Place where there is no war and friendship that never
ends
Everyone is happy and smiling
All of the enemies become friends
Coming together and not fighting
Equal to each other, no differences.

❖ *Help the children understand that the materials they use were made by Maria Montessori.*

- Ask the children to identify a favorite activity in the classroom.
- Find pictures from early Montessori schools of children using the materials we have in the classroom.
- Explain how children have been exploring these same materials for over 100 years.

❖ *Write an article for your parents examining the importance of Montessori's gifts.*

Exploring Our Bodies

At a recent board meeting, a suggestion was made to explore some materials demonstrating various systems in the human body. Here are a few activities that might be of interest.

Circulatory System

The circulatory system is composed of the heart, veins, arteries and, of course blood. Here are a few activities to help the children understand the components that make up blood. Blood is made up of 4 distinct elements with significantly different jobs. These activities will give the children an understanding of each part and why each is essential.

The first activity might be appropriate for a large group lesson that may become a stationary work for the children to explore sensorially.

First pour water into a clear basin. The water represents the plasma in the blood. The plasma's job is to help the blood move through your veins, heart and lungs easily.

Add hydrated red water beads (available at Walmart or Oriental Trading) so that the water is almost completely covered with the beads. These represent the red blood cells. Red blood cells carry oxygen from your lungs to every part of your body.

Add a few ping pong balls. The ping pong balls represent the white blood cells. There are 700 red cells to every white cell, so just one or two ping pong balls are needed. White blood cells fight germs, bacteria and viruses. When you get sick, your body makes more white blood cells to help you get better.

Add several rectangular pieces of foam sheets for the platelets. There are 20-25 red blood cells for every platelet. Platelets help your wounds to heal. They stop your cuts from bleeding and help to form scabs over your cuts.

The next activity might be appropriate for individual work.

Line a clear jelly jar with a zip lock baggie.

Pour ¼ cup of corn syrup into the lined jar. This represents the blood plasma.

Pour a tablespoon of cinnamon red hots into the lined jar. These represent the red blood cells.

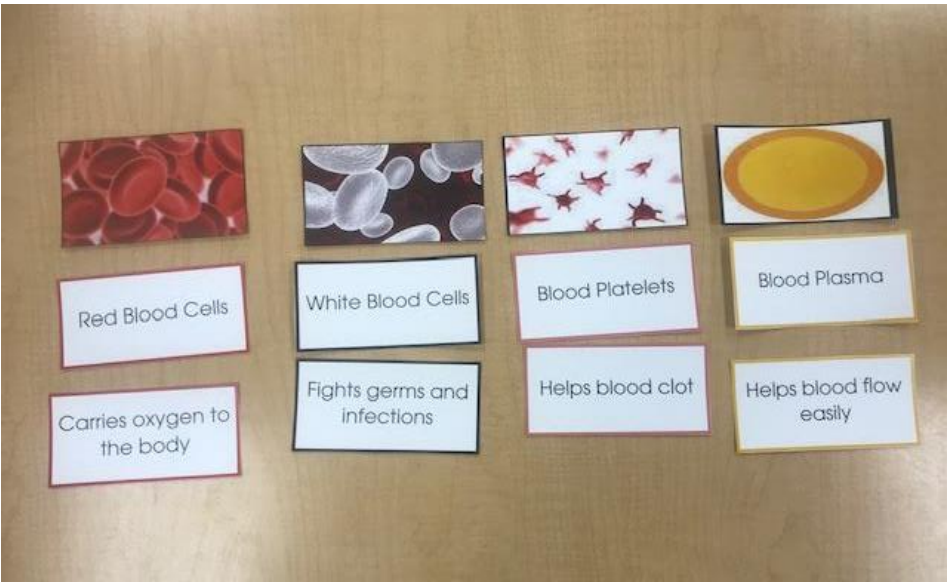
Add one mini marshmallow. This represents the white blood cells.

Add ¼ teaspoon of white sprinkles (the rectangular shaped ones). This represents the platelets.

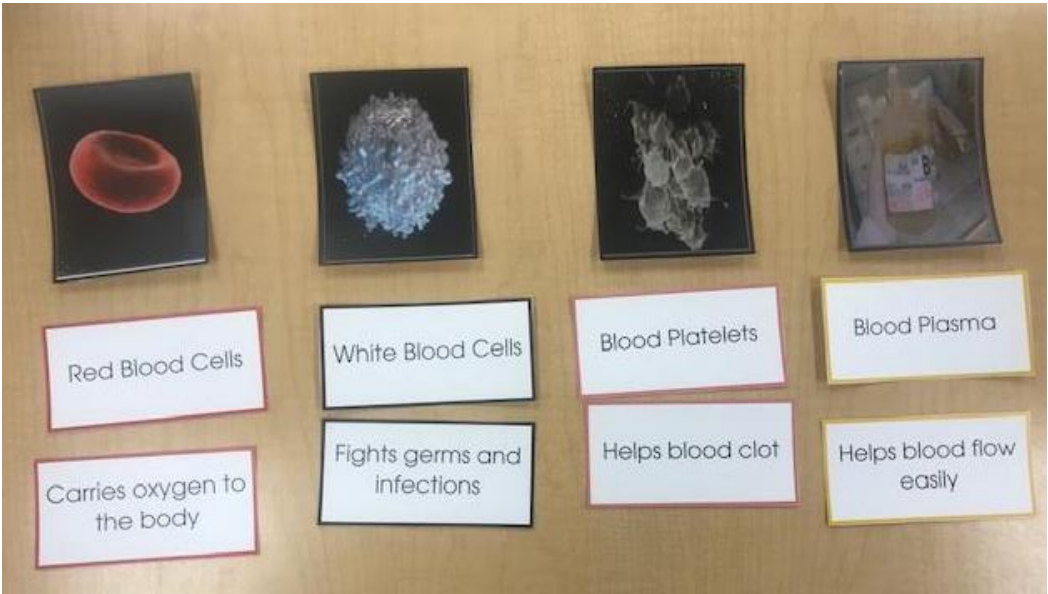
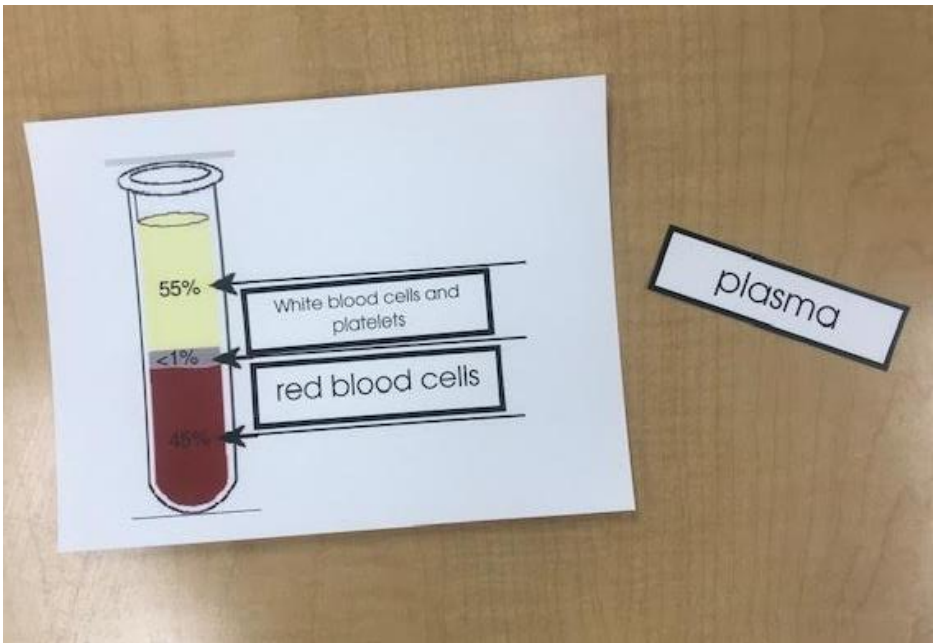
Seal the zip lock bag or ask for assistance.

The following materials are for the shelf after the initial presentations have been made.

Representations of the cells



Percentage of each blood element.

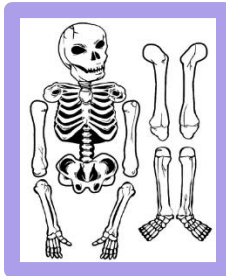


Actual photos of the cells

The Skeleton

This skeleton is close to child size which adds a point of interest. The bones are separate (head, ribs, pelvis, upper and lower legs and arms, hands and feet) and have labels. The children first

assemble the skeleton, label, then mimic the position. The names of the individual bones are on the backs to self-correct with the labels. There is also a table top size the children can use to place the bones on top of the image of a child.



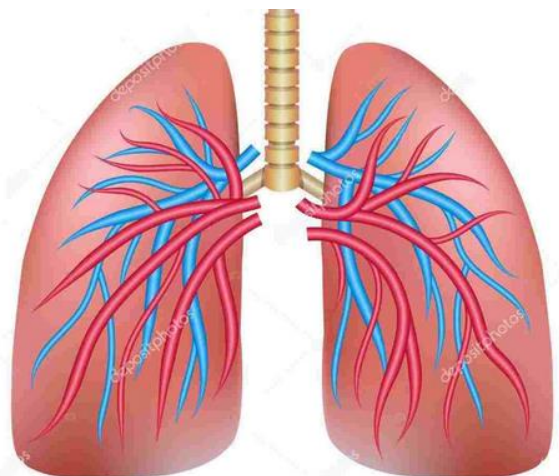
The Nervous System

One more interesting activity is creating a spine and spinal cord. Cut a pool noodle into 24 1 inch pieces to represent the vertebrae. Using the noodle's circumference as a pattern, trace and cut 24 circles out of foam sheets using a different color than the noodle to represent the discs. Cut one more disc a little larger than the others. Cut a small hole in the center of all the discs. Take a length of braided plastic clothes line to represent the spinal cord and tie a knot on one end. Place the large disc on first, then alternate vertebra and disc. The children string all the vertebrae onto the clothes line. Allowing for a little extra length, use a clothes pin to hold your vertebrae on. Compare this spinal column with an uncut length of pool noodle. The children will see how flexible the model of the spinal column is compared to the uncut noodle.

Another activity might be to use a clear plastic tube and thread different colored wires in it to represent the nervous system. Cut holes in the tube at various spots and pull one wire out. Continue all the way down the tube. Using the skeleton model, place the spinal column on the skeleton and guess which nerves control the arms, legs lungs, heart, etc. The children might enjoy threading the spinal cord with wires through the spinal column instead of using the clothes line.

The Respiratory System

While putting a plastic tube in a paper bag and securing it with a rubber band will give the children an image of how our lungs look when we inhale and exhale, putting an image of the vessels carrying blood needing oxygen to the lungs (blue) and oxygen rich red blood vessels carrying it away from the lungs on the bag helps the children understand the function of the lungs. It's also fun to show the children the blue veins on the inside of their wrists. Which way is that blood going? To the lungs or away from the lungs?



MMS - What's In It For Me?

Individual membership and school affiliation in the Michigan Montessori Society help you keep in touch with other active Montessorians! Networking with others committed to promoting authentic Montessori programs is vital to your professional growth. Don't miss the opportunity to join our vibrant organization.

- MMS presents two professional development seminars every year. Members enjoy a significant reduction in seminar fees.*
- A newly designed website has launched! We continue to work on ways to make your experience as an MMS member more timely and exciting!*
- You can register for seminars and become a member online using your credit card.*
- MMS publishes a newsletter online, posts job openings, promotes educational opportunities and disseminates other helpful information.*
- Because most MMS communication will be sent electronically, it is imperative that you provide us with your email address. Please be assured that we do not sell or share our electronic list with anyone.*
- We have also assumed the important task of advocating for Montessori education at the State level. There is power in numbers; your membership supports our efforts (see MMEAN article above).*
- You will be notified when affiliated schools offer MMS Mini Workshops that may interest your staff. (see articles above)*
- You will be able to sponsor a MMS Mini at your school to increase awareness of your program in the Montessori community and receive benefits for your staff.*

The Michigan Montessori Society's objectives are to:

- Broaden understanding of the Montessori method*
- Encourage the growth of Montessori education*
- Act as an information center*
- Support existing schools*
- Provide professional development*

In order to continue to receive these benefits and more, join MMS today!