

Board Notes...from our MMS Board Member

Erin Compton



Hello MMS members, my name is Erin Compton. I am a parent of two children; my daughter is graduating high school this year and my son is in middle school. I am so grateful that they had the opportunity to attend a Montessori school. It was a wonderful experience for both of them. These days I spend my leisure time taking daily walks with my dogs and attending my kids' sporting events. I love to be outside and enjoy nature.

I have been on the MMS board for about five years; however, I have been involved in Montessori for over 25 years. My journey started when I was in college, struggling to find the right path. Having started in psychology with an emphasis on family and community services, I quickly realized that this was not my path. Elementary education with a major in child development went smoothly, until I started my hands-on experiences in classrooms. It wasn't clicking and I started to panic. I knew I wanted to work with children and families, but I could not find the right fit. A family friend shared that they were hiring summer staff at her school. I knew nothing about Montessori, but as soon as I entered the primary classroom, I was in awe. This was "it" for me, at the time not really knowing what "it" was. "It" was respect between the adults and children, the way they interacted with one another, the materials and the beauty of the room. It was so pleasant. My eyes darted around, trying to take it all in. I sat and observed and I did not want to leave. I had found my path. I dove in and here I am today.

I love so many aspects of Montessori education, but now that I have experience with teachers from traditional settings, what stands out is the three-year cycle. I am reminded of how beneficial it is to the teacher, child, and family that we have the potential of having our students for up to three years. The relationships that can grow in that length of time are priceless. The sense of community is strong. We have the opportunity to really know our students, which allows us the opportunity to truly "follow the child."

I am on the workshop and membership committees and assist with the newsletter and affiliation committees when needed. Outside of my board obligations, I review proposals for the AMS National Conference and am an instructor at ADMTEI, where I trained. I truly enjoy mentoring teachers in training. I love seeing that spark ignite in them, like it did in me. I am so lucky to be able to be a part of these outstanding Montessori communities and have the opportunity to engage with passionate individuals within Montessori. I feel blessed to be able to spend time with all of these dedicated people on a regular basis.

Summer...
Hang on!
It's almost
here!

Michigan Montessori Board of Directors 2021-22

Karen Lumsden, President
Children's Place Montessori
cpmontessori@gmail.com

Theresa Weber, Secretary
Adrian (ADMTEI) Training Center
tweber@comcast.net

Cyndi Iannuzzi, VP
Montessori Children's Academy
ciannuzzi@montessori-childrens-academy.org

Mary Lamos, Treasurer
Montessori Center of Downriver
Mary.Lamos@gmail.com

Shannon Tyrybon
MMTEC
shannont@montessoriedu.com

Erin Compton
Adrian (ADMTEI) Training Center
erin.m.compton@gmail.com

Denise VanPelt
Grand Rapids Montessori
vanpelt@students.GRPS.org

Maggie Bischoff
Brookview School
mbischoff@brookviewschool.org

Sue Szczesny
Birmingham Community Montessori
suemariesez@gmail.com

Mona Ahuja
Maria Montessori Center
mrsahujamc@gmail.com

Cathé Calder
Meadow Montessori
ccalder@meadowmontessori.org

Kathy Smoko, Admin. Asst.
Kathy@mmsoc.org
MMS Phone (313) 405-0668

MMEAN Update

Michigan Montessori Education Advocacy Network is working for YOU!

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 and teachers are included in and protected by any legislation and regulations that will impact them.

By Denise Van Pelt

Montessori Public Policy Initiative (MPPI) is a joint collaboration between AMS and AMI/USA. As the experts on Montessori policy and advocacy, MPPI unites, supports, and equips the Montessori community, creating an effective advocacy voice for authentic Montessori education. MPPI drives education policy change so that all children have access to the gifts of a Montessori education.

Michigan Montessori Educators Advocacy Network (MMEAN) is working closely with MPPI in our efforts to secure equitable recognition for Montessori teachers. This work is being done in connection with LARA and MDE. Recently, Michigan Montessori Society (MMS) adopted the MPPI Essential Elements as standards for Affiliate and Member Schools. This article examines one of the Essential Elements of an authentic Montessori program.

Looking at the MPPI Essentials: Uninterrupted Montessori daily work periods, with 3-hour work periods being the ideal.

As Montessorians, we know our days and schedules look very different from traditional schools. Within a school day, the work cycle is one which can change from a hum of students working, to a time when students are moving around the class with what seems like no purpose. This is the natural ebb and flow of the day. Here, where we see for ourselves what Maria Montessori meant when she said *"When the child is finished [working] he is eager to share his joy, to help the little ones, and because the others have respected his work he never thinks of interfering with those who are still at work."* (Maria Montessori) Students may choose a work, finish it, pause to do their own observation of the class or to assist a fellow classmate, and return to a new work. This process is what truly sets a Montessori class apart from other programs. This time, when the children are permitted to move at their own pace throughout the day, gives the child the freedom to accomplish the tasks in the order they find most satisfying. Giving a program three uninterrupted hours of work time allows for the ebb and flow to be natural and full of self-motivated learning for students.

Think of what Maria Montessori was referring to when she said *"Children of three or four will concentrate for an hour at a time without effort, and we are careful not to destroy this new power by the arbitrary demands of a fixed timetable."* It is this time when the child is in the prepared environment with the materials inviting and encouraging the learning to take place. The child who is not concerned about time is able to concentrate on what is before him.

This is the ideal work cycle in the Montessori classroom. If students have this stretch of time where they are in their work environment, they may take on larger lessons

without interruption. This allows the level of concentration to be maintained. In programs where students are given the time without interruption, the cycle of learning is able to meet the needs of each student. The student does not feel rushed, and thus may go deeper into the material to explore what could otherwise be undiscovered. This truly unlocks the child's potential.

As Montessorians reflect on their own practices, the total number of hours of work time is not the main focus. Rather, it is the length of time which is uninterrupted. What happens to students while they are at school and how much time is given to them to be in their classrooms with materials matters.

"The mind takes some time to develop interest, to be set in motion, to get warmed up into a subject, to attain a state of profitable work. If at this time there is interruption, not only is a period of profitable work lost, but the interruption, produces an unpleasant sensation which is identical to fatigue.

Fatigue also is caused by work unsuitable to the individual. Suitable work reduces fatigue on account of the pleasure derived from the work itself. Thus, the two causes of fatigue are unsuitable work and premature interruption of work." (Dr. Maria Montessori, 'What You Should Know About Your Child', Kalakshetra Publications, 135)

A New Benefit from MMS -

Classroom Activities You Can Use

By Sue Szczesny

This year, along with the other benefits of being a Michigan Montessori Member, we have sent out two teacher-made materials that members can print and use in their classrooms. It is a fun way to share with other Montessorians, so we plan to continue this benefit for the 2022-23 membership year. You will receive two "Montessori gifts" this year...maybe more! If you would like to share something you have created for the children at your school, please email it to Kathy@mmsoc.org. Please note, we will **not** be sharing any copyrighted materials.



Oceans, Seas & the Great Lakes Booklet



Community Workers Sorting Work



The above activities were sent out to all MMS members during the 2021-22 membership year



MMS Creates a New Way to Welcome Board Hopefuls

By Erin Compton

Hello MMS members!

Would you enjoy interacting once a month with other dedicated Montessorians and become energized by serving on an interesting committee? Can you see yourself as a member of this amazing group of Montessori professionals who work to keep authentic Montessori strong in Michigan? If so, then we have some exciting news to share with you.

An MMS board sub-committee developed an application to streamline the process of applying to run for the MMS board. We encourage all who would like to help guide MMS to consider completing the application. However, prior to your decision to apply, please think seriously about the commitment. Consider if you have time to dedicate to at least one monthly meeting (2 hours) and have an interest in serving on a committee (monthly time commitment varies). If you determine that you would like to pursue running for the MMS board, the process starts with filling out and submitting an application. (see below).

After receiving your application, we will invite you to a board meeting (via Zoom) so that we can get to know each other, learn about what you hope to bring to the board, and give you a chance to ask any questions you may have about the MMS board.

The MMS Board of Directors consists of twelve members, elected for three-year terms. Each year, four board seats are open for election. In the past, nominations were made directly to members of the Election Committee. With this new application process, we hope to reach a broader population of interested Montessorians and increase the number of potential candidates for our ballot. We would like to expand our community and try to have representatives in all areas of the state. If you are interested, you can click [here](#) to fill out the application for the MMS board. Once we receive the application, one of our board members will be in touch. Thank you for your consideration.

Link to application: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1t9bJ9iTnQbMaLF5K4cJ6-LuhDbcVu4V9ozVltibnIrl/edit?usp=sharing>



Know When to Say No...

And Know Where to Send Parents For Help

By Karen Lumsden

Many years ago, I made a decision to interview every child seeking admission into our school before offering the family enrollment documents. During the visit, I observe the child in our Montessori environment, watch to see the level of engagement and ability to focus, and assess the child's willingness to separate from the parent. The vast majority of children are ready to enter our program. We have been able to welcome children who have developmental delays, autism diagnosis and speech and language issues. However, there are some children that I determine we do not have the staffing or expertise to meet their needs.

While the recent MMS workshop in March helped greatly with developing skills needed to have conversations with families of children in our programs, children we have been able to observe at length to document our concerns backed by our factual reflections, how do we address parents of children we have only been with for 30 minutes to an hour? How do we know in such a short time whether or not this child will benefit from what our school has to offer? When I was in the classroom, I most often took a chance on these little ones, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. But when I stepped out of the classroom, I became a bit more discerning as I knew others would have the major responsibility of following through with my decisions. I became more critical of what I thought we as a staff could handle, of how effectively our program could meet the children's needs.

I needed help to quickly determine which child with special needs would prosper in our environment and which child needed expertise and more attention than we could offer. The months of preparation for a challenging conversation with parents would never happen...I needed to establish a degree of trust with the parents quickly and offer help to this family immediately. I turned to a friend for help. Jessica Ravineala operates The Therapy SPOT in Farmington Hills. Her clinic provides support for children with speech and language issues, offers physical therapy, occupational therapy, and sensory integration, and addresses behavioral concerns. She shared the following...

"There are many observations one may make that would indicate the need for outside referral. Sometimes it is helpful to think of it in terms of how easily they can respond to help or guidance from an adult. Children who have difficulty figuring out how to use novel toys, such as how to set them up or clean them up, or have difficulty figuring out these tasks with some adult help, may have difficulty with motor skills. Children who have difficulty with eye contact, may be struggling with attention or engagement. Children who have difficulty following simple directions (ex: take your shoes off) or answering simple questions (ex: do you like this toy?) may be demonstrating delays in language development. By the time they reach school age, there are many skills that they should have, but some skills are dependent upon exposure. For example, if their parents never set the expectation for them to remove their shoes, they may not know how to do it, but should be able to make a close attempt and need little help. It is hard to differentiate between a child's personality/prior experience and their developmental abilities. When there is a doubt, it never hurts to at least reach out for a consultation with an occupational or speech therapist; this is a service we provide via phone call or email at any time. Often, other professionals will contact us to determine whether or not to even have a discussion with the family. Other times, a concerned provider may recommend that the family reach out to us directly for a consultation. Whenever I am bringing up developmental concerns about a child for the first time, I always like to ask the parents for their input. For example, I may say, 'I'm noticing that Johnny is having a hard time figuring out how to use that toy. Is that something you see at home, too?' Once the parent identifies they also see a concern, then it makes it much easier to transition to a

recommendation such as, "It might be worth a consultation to see if he would benefit from additional support." If the parent identifies no concerns, then I will at least try to encourage them to monitor it by saying, "Ok, well if you start to notice this becoming difficult at home, then it might be worth a consultation to get a professional opinion."

Most school districts have Child Find (for children 3 – 6) and Early On (children under 3) programs to assess children that may have special needs. In addition, they provide classes specifically designed to meet the particular needs of children with speech and language issues, occupational therapy needs and those that may be on the autism spectrum.

Do some research on private clinics in your area that may offer more immediate help to families as the public schools may take some time (up to 90 days) to offer an evaluation and therapy. Call and speak with local clinicians and find one that you believe will meet the needs of the families you refer.

Our community is fortunate to have a private preschool / developmental kindergarten that serves children with special needs. Walnut Lake Preschool welcomes two classes of eight children with a variety of challenges. The teachers in both classes are early childhood specialists and the assistants are specially trained. In addition to the classrooms, they have a sensory room and a large playground. Each family is assigned a family consultant that meets weekly with the parents to provide guidance in working at home with their child. The children receive speech and language, occupational therapy or sensory integration therapy (if needed) while they are at school.



SPEECH & LANGUAGE

- Not babbling by 9 mo.
- Only making vowel sounds by 9 mo. (ex: 'aaa' without occasional 'bah' or 'mmm')
- No first words by 15 mo.
- No consistent words by 18 mo.
- Not saying 10 single words by 18 mo.
- No word combinations by 24 mo.
- Not saying 50 single words by 24 mo.
- Difficulty understanding child's speech at 24 mo.
- Saying only 1 or 2 words at a time by 36 mo.
- Strangers having difficulty understanding child's speech at 36 mo.
- Put words in wrong order or omits words like 'in, the' or word endings like, '-ing' at 48 mo.
- Unable to produce most sounds correctly by age 5 yrs., except for R, L, TH

Make sure you have contact information for the programs available in your community readily available. I have created a document that has a short description of the services each of these programs/clinics offer along with their locations and phone numbers. While we may or may not be able to offer care and support to every child that comes to us, we should be able to direct the parents to someone who can address their child's needs. Jessica also provided a list of "red flags" that might be helpful in recognizing behaviors indicating early intervention may be needed.

ATTENTION & REGULATION

- Doesn't sustain attention to task for 5 min. several times a day, by 24 mo.
- Extreme tantrums or unable to recover from minor upsets easily by 24 mo.
- Extreme difficulty with transitions between tasks or places, changes in routine
- Extreme fears that interfere with daily routine
- Doesn't display a variety of emotions (ex: frustration, sad, mad, happy, excitement) by 24 mo.
- Unable to attend to task for 10 min. by 5 yrs.

PLAY & SOCIAL SKILLS

- Doesn't smile or giggle in response to people by 6 mo.
- Doesn't show enjoyment with others through facial expressions or eye contact by 9 mo.
- Doesn't participate in simple games like peek-a-boo or rolling a ball by 12 mo.
- Doesn't imitate simple actions during play by 16 mo.
- Unaware of changes in environment or lack of exploring environment purposefully by 18 mo.
- Doesn't use objects for their intended purpose during play (ex: spoon, etc.) by 24 mo.
- Difficulty using objects for a purpose other than what is intended (ex: bowl for a hat) during play by 30 mo.
- Lack of pretend play or limited pretend play by 36 mo.
- Difficulty playing cooperatively with peers or following rules of a game by 48 mo.

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

- Stuttering that causes child embarrassment, frustration, or difficulty with peers
- Not startling or reacting to loud noises by 6 mo.
- Not communicating wants/needs through eye gaze or gestures (pointing, showing, etc.) by 12 mo.
- Not responding to name or common words, like 'no' or 'bye' by 12 mo.
- Not following simple directions ("roll the ball") by 24 mo.
- Not able to answer 'what' or 'who' questions by 36 mo.
- Not initiating conversation, speaking only when spoken to or repeating others by 36 mo.
- Speaks only about present instead of past/future events at 48 mo.
- Difficulty following 2 step directions by 48 mo.
- Difficulty answering 'how' or 'why' questions, or questions about past/future by age 5 yrs.
- Doesn't engage in reciprocal conversation or make relevant comments by 5yrs.

VISUAL SKILLS

- Doesn't make eye contact during feeding (close up) for several seconds by 3 mo.
 - Doesn't visually follow objects/people by 6 mo.
 - Doesn't notice small objects a few feet away by 9 mo.
- Doesn't recognize familiar objects/people up to 20 ft. away by 18 mo.
 - Difficulty finding details in picture book by 24 mo.
- Unable to put together simple insert puzzles or matching simple shapes by 36 mo.

FEEDING & ORAL MOTOR

- Hasn't progressed to purees by 6 mo.
- Difficulty clearing spoon with upper lip by 9 mo.
- Not eating a variety of foods by 12 mo.
- Unable to drink from a sippy cup by 12 mo.
- Gags easily
- Hasn't progressed from pureed foods to pieces by 14 mo.
- Not having at least 10 consistent foods in each group by 24 months or omitting foods previously eaten (fruits/vegetables, carbs, proteins)
- Unable to drink from straw by 24 mo.

Developmental Screening for children 5 and under.

6 MONTHS- 1 YEAR

	YES
1. Has not achieved appropriate gross motor milestones	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Unable to follow object with eyes or turn towards sounds	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does not respond (smile, eye contact) to adult interaction or shows limited interest in others	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Difficulty maintaining object in hand	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Does not use sounds to get your attention or vocalize when excited/upset	<input type="checkbox"/>

1-2 YEARS

6. Doesn't search for objects that are hidden	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Difficulty with walking	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Does not point to objects/pictures or use pincer grasp	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Difficulty using both hands together during play	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Doesn't repeat sounds/gestures when laughed at	<input type="checkbox"/>

2-3 YEARS

11. Difficulty matching objects to pictures or finding details in picture books	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Difficulty scribbling or drawing horizontal/vertical lines or stringing beads	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Difficulty participating in simple pretend play	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Difficulty separating from parents in familiar surroundings	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Unable to feed self with fingers, utensils or not eating most adult table foods	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Unable to run well, stand on 1 foot, jump with 2 feet together, or go up/down stairs alone	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Not using 2 word sentences, not speaking at least 50 words	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Does not know function of common household objects, unable to understand simple instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>

4-5 YEARS

19. Unable to throw a ball overhand or catch a ball with both hands	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Unable to stand on 1 leg, hop on 1 leg, or pump a swing	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Difficulty drawing a circle, cutting on a line, or folding paper	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Difficulty with complex pretend play, cooperating with peers, taking turns or sharing with others	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Difficulty attending to tasks, transitioning between tasks, or tolerating changes in routine	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Unable to dress self or manage fasteners (snaps, buttons, zipper)	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Not using sentences of more than 3 words or discussing daily activities and experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Not using "me" and "you" correctly or understanding 2 part commands with prepositions	<input type="checkbox"/>

The above lists are reprinted with permission from The Therapy SPOT

MiRegistry –



Required Health and Safety Training for 2022

Here is the link to this required 2 hour training event: [Health and Safety Refresher 2022](#)

While we have until Oct. 31, 2022 to complete it, there's no reason to put it off! Just click on the link and log into your MiRegistry account. If you need help creating an account, you may contact MMS Administrative Assistant, Kathy Smoko at Kathy@mmsoc.org.

Senate Bill 1010 and Your Voice

By Denise VanPelt

"First fruits" of Advocacy's labor on your behalf are about to blossom!



The Michigan Montessori Education Advocacy Network is excited to announce the presentation of Senate Bill 1010.

This legislation is a pathway for Montessori educators to obtain a Michigan teaching license. This means the teacher certification process for Montessori educators to be licensed to teach in the state of Michigan will be streamlined. This bill acknowledges the Montessori teacher preparation through either AMI or AMS and which is accredited by MACTE as being rigorous and covering critical areas which prepare future educators for the classroom.

Before I tell you about the bill, I want to briefly tell you my Montessori story. I am a Montessorian and have been since I attended Gateway Montessori School in Royal Oak, Michigan when I was three years old. My Montessori path continued when after I earned my bachelor's degree, I obtained my AMI diploma. I taught for several years in a private Montessori school but was not able to teach in a public Montessori school as I did not have a state teaching license. To become state certified, I had to return to graduate school and pass a test prior to being able to move into the public sector. This cost both time and money. I hope your story will be different, and with the passing of Senate Bill 1010, it can be true.

This bill will help the state of Michigan in several ways. The first is helping to relieve some of the teacher shortage. Currently the shortage is taking a toll on many schools. This bill will grow the pool of candidates to fill teaching positions. A second way this bill will help the state of Michigan is by preparing candidates to be fully prepared to teach in the schools with little to no additional cost to school districts. Montessori educators will still be required to meet the high standards which the state requires, including having a bachelor's degree, being certified in CPR and passing the MTTC. Montessori educators will also be required to take three credit hours of diagnostic reading courses within the first six years of certification.

As a Montessorian, this bill is one I hope will become a law. I implore anyone who agrees with me to think about how a single voice makes a difference. You can help move [Senate Bill 1010](#) forward and guarantee it becomes law. How? There are several ways including contacting your district's senator. Use the talking points which can be [found here](#). You can also invite your district's senator to visit a Montessori school. Another way is to write testimony stating why this bill is important to you. There are other ways you may use your voice to advocate for bill 1010, which can be [found here](#). If you would like to support MMEAN, or for more information, you may send an email to us at michigan.montessoriadvocacy@gmail.com. We all lead busy lives, but there are times when you must make time to encourage our leaders to move in a direction that will assure a better future for us and those that will follow. Be an advocate for the causes you believe in.



MMS Members Only*

Summer Raffle

MMS's 2nd Annual Summer Raffle - Join and Win!

Teaching Timbers, creators of wooden Montessori furniture and materials, has donated several items to be raffled off this summer. Start your school year with new small stools, demonstration/floor tables, or a book stand when you join MMS in June* to qualify for the raffle...and check out their product line at www.teachingtimbers.com!

Demonstration / Floor Tables

Extra Large



23 x 18 x 11

Large



21 x 16 x 11

Medium



19 x 15 x 11

Small



17 x 13 x 11

Stools



Bookstands



***Membership for the 2022-23 school year begins July 1, 2022.**

Only members that renew their membership for the 2022-23 school year prior to the August drawing are eligible to win in the 2022 MMS Summer Raffle.

MMS Seeks to Broaden Its Reach

Michigan Montessori Society has announced a new level of membership for schools not yet affiliated with MMS.



Michigan Montessori Society is proud of the services we provide the Montessori community:

- Workshops to help teachers / guides / administrators grow in our chosen professions
- Advocacy for Montessori teachers and support for Montessori schools in Lansing
- Networking through our newsletter, website and alerts
- Ability to reach out to those seeking an authentic Montessori program for their children
- Opportunity to create a greater Montessori community in Michigan

We are also proud of our affiliate schools that provide authentic Montessori environments in their communities and welcome new affiliates that meet the criteria for affiliation.

To include more schools and expand the reach of Montessori in our state, we have created a new membership level – **Member Schools** - for schools that are not affiliated with MMS. This membership is offered to schools who meet the standards of the Montessori Public Policy Initiative's (MPPI) Essential Elements:

- A full complement of Montessori materials
- Uninterrupted work periods (three hours being ideal)
- MACTE Approved Trained Teacher for each class
- Multi age classes, 3 years being the ideal
- Students assessed through observation and record keeping

In addition to membership in a professional Montessori organization, the benefits of maintaining MMS membership are:

- Discounts to MMS workshops both virtual and in person
- Receiving updates on the advocacy work MMS is actively doing on your behalf in Lansing
- Newsletters with Montessori specific articles or ideas for your program's growth
- A window cling (see above) announcing your membership in MMS to parents & visitors

Membership in MMS lets parents know that your program belongs to a professional organization that promotes quality early childhood programs. Your MMS membership shows that you support our mission of encouraging professional growth, earning the recognition of our teachers as professionals, and helping schools provide the best early childhood programs.

We hope that you will consider joining MMS as either an Affiliate or Member School and help us create a statewide Montessori community that can speak with one voice when we seek to secure respect and appreciation for the quality of our teachers and the recognition of our unique approach to the education of young children.

We look forward to connecting with you to create a stronger MMS.



Summer Camp Fun - Ideas from the Forest School

by Karen Lumsden

The summer program at Children's Place Montessori offers "enrichment classes" every day. Last summer, we added "forest school" activities to our enrichment schedule. Although Forest Schools have been around for years, it was a new idea to us. Children attending a forest school do not have a traditional classroom; the children spend their day outside, exploring nature and learning from it, all year around. This idea intrigued me and I did a bit of research on the lessons that a typical forest school might offer. Here are several ideas we used last summer and a few we plan on using the coming summer.



Hill slide

Such a simple activity, but one that really develops enjoyment, resilience and physical development.

All you need is some sort of slight slope in your setting. This simple activity is one that children enjoy repeating again and again. In winter when the ground is snow covered, sledding is great fun! At other times of the year, it is more a case of rolling down the slope.

Rope Swing

An excellent simple activity that develops teamwork.

All you need is some sort of reasonably sturdy tree, and a strong rope. The adult will need to throw the rope over the tree branch. One end of the rope has a wooden seat tied simply to it. One child sits on this seat, and then their friends try to pull the swing up! You normally need a minimum of four children to do this, but sometimes it can take more. It is like a tug of war, with the child on the seat being gradually lifted into the air, hopefully. When they are up, they can try and swing. Another benefit of this activity is in the children recruiting a team to work together to pull on the rope!



Fire pit

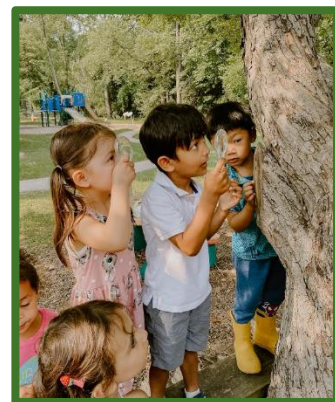
This was one of the highlights of our forest school activities. It is also the one that required the greatest awareness of safety. Our fire was contained but it's always a good idea to stress to the children that they must give the fire a wide berth! Fire-pits introduce children to risky elements, i.e. fire! Our fire pit was in the middle of our sand pit. The children enjoyed roasting marshmallows and making s'mores.



Hunting for bugs There are many naturally occurring places where bugs can be found. You can teach children how to look out for these, and how to investigate them. Turning over a piece of wood revealing hundreds of bugs is a real thrill.

Mud Pies

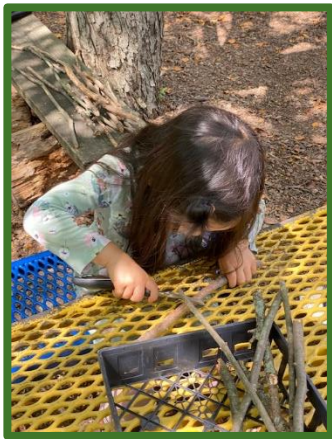
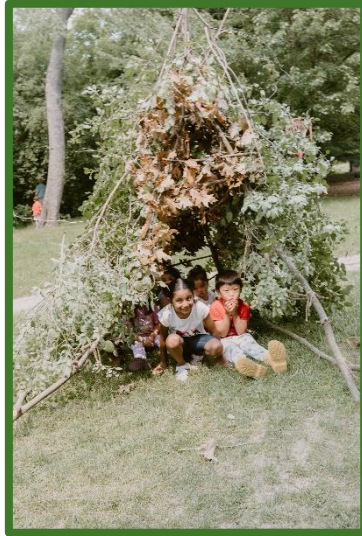
Making mud pies was great, messy fun. We used our sand and water table to create lovely mud and created our pies on paper plates. The children decorated their "pies" with twigs, leaves, berries and grass. Of course, jumping in mud was even more fun!





Building a Structure.

We cut down some branches from the trees in our playground and created a teepee using twine and sticks. After the framework was made, we gathered some branches with leaves on them and hung them from the frame. The children enjoyed this special place throughout the summer.



Whittling twigs.

Using vegetable peelers, the children whittled the bark off twigs, exposing the smooth wood below.



Here are some games we plan on adding to our Forest School activities this coming summer.

Are You as Clever as a Squirrel?

Have the children create eight to ten acorns or nuts to bury. Write their names on the back of their nut pictures.

The game is to bury or hide all your nuts in different places. Then come in for a snack, a story or whatever. After a while, the children go outside and gather their nuts to see if they recall where they buried them. If they find someone else's nuts while gathering, they may collect them. Then count the nuts and see if the children have been as clever as squirrels!



Photographic Memory Game

Before class, go outside and collect 6 – 8 common objects. Acorn, blade of grass, twig, stone, leaf, bark, wood chip, or anything you can find that is not the only one of its kind. Arrange the objects on a sheet of paper and cover them with a cloth.

When the time for the game begins, have the children stare at the objects and memorize them and their position on the paper. Allow them to stare at the objects for about 30 seconds. Replace the cloth and send them outside to collect the objects they recall seeing and bring them back. Provide a paper for them to position the objects as they recall seeing them under the cloth.

For example:

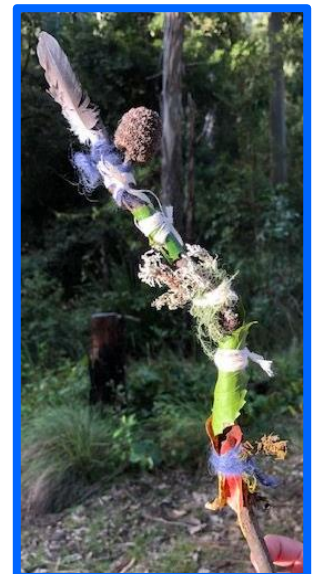


Journey Stick

You will need sticks about 12 – 18 inches long and some yarn. The children begin their journey outside with a stick with a length of yarn tied to the top. As they walk through the outside area, encourage them to pick up items that appeal to them and attach them to their stick using the yarn to wrap part of the item to the stick. As they continue to walk, other objects are added to the stick.

When they return to the classroom, they can share their journey, telling where they went using the objects they've collected to help them recall their path.









Examples:



Summer Scavenger Hunt

Create a sheet with items your children might experience when exploring your outside environment. Have them go outside with their sheet and cross off the items they find outside.

Example:

<p>sprouts</p> 	<p>hear bird</p> 	<p>bud</p> 
<p>bug</p> 	<p>fallen log</p> 	<p>hear wind</p> 
<p>bird</p> 	<p>soggy ground</p> 	<p>cloud</p> 
<p>Extra Fun</p> <p>What else to you see, feel or hear?</p>		

MMS - What's in it for Me?



Individual, Member School and Affiliate School membership 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 timelier and more 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.
- New! You will receive at least two activities you can reprint and use in your classroom.
- 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.
- You will be notified when affiliated schools offer mini workshops that may interest 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! *



*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.

MMS Trading Places...For Sale...For Trade...For Free

Have something you no longer want, but think it could be useful to someone else? Have something that you just can't throw away, but don't have a need for it?

Here's where you can avoid adding to landfills, help someone out, and possibly earn a little cash! If you see something here you might be able to put to good use, please send an email to Kathy at Kathy@mmsoc.org. If you have something you'd like to offer in the next newsletter, contact Kathy at (313) 405-0668.



Lacing activities - Free



Small cutting boards - Free