

Jesse McCarthy

For 20 years, Jesse McCarthy has worked with thousands of children, parents, teachers, and administrators—as a principal for infants to 8th graders, an executive with a nationwide group of private schools, an elementary and junior-high teacher, and a parent-and-teacher mentor. Jesse received his B.A. in Psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and his Montessori teacher's diploma for ages 2.5 to 6+ from Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), the organization founded by Dr. Maria Montessori. Jesse has spoken on early education and child development at schools around the globe, as well as at popular organizations in and outside of the Montessori community. Jesse now heads MontessoriEducation.com and hosts The Montessori Education Podcast (<https://www.montessorieducation.com/podcast-jesse-mccarthy>).

“Montessori: Not Just for Children” (Keynote)

“The child developing harmoniously and the adult improving himself at his side make a very exciting and attractive picture” (Maria Montessori). The Montessori Method is actually a real-world philosophy for all ages and a profoundly uplifting approach to learning—and living—for children and adults alike. As Maria Montessori said: “The teacher too must develop.” This keynote is a dive into Montessori for “grownups”. Specifically, it is about how Montessori can help solve the real-world problems we face today as teachers: whether that’s the weight of more demanding parents, the frustration of less focused children, or the sometimes-stressful culture outside our school doors (or all of the above). Ultimately, our Montessori work is not just for children but also for ourselves. And what a joy it can be when we approach our days in this way, growing right alongside the children in our classrooms!

*A one-page handout with key points and quotes will be provided after the keynote.

“Discipline: Dealing with ‘Difficult’ Children” (All Levels) (AM and PM)

Children are wonderful, but they can also be difficult. Given the challenges we face as educators, what can we do? First, we can acknowledge that we’re not alone. Second, we can get back to basics in learning the principles and practices of discipline and of dealing with even the most “difficult” children in our classrooms. In this breakout session, we’ll be answering the age-old question, “What do I do with this child?!” And we won’t be doing this “in theory”, via some preachy academic essay or picture-perfect Instagram story, but rather in practice, based in the often-messy real world of our work with children (and with ourselves). Bring any and all questions, concerns, frustrations, I’m-losing-my-mind situations, etc., as no problem will be too big or too small to tackle.

*An overview handout and a heat-of-the-moment cheat sheet will be provided after the session.

Jennifer Nolan

Jennifer Nolan is Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives, Administrator Course Coordinator, and an instructor for Seton Montessori Institute. Holding AMS Early Childhood and Administrator certifications, Jennifer was Head of Seton Montessori School for 13 years. Jennifer specializes in educational leadership, organizational communication, practical life, and sensorimotor curricula. An active school consultant and Montessori coach, she is also a member of the AMS School Accreditation Commission. www.linkedin.com/in/jennifer-nolan-51670514.

“Assisting on the Road to Normalization: The Essential Role of the Assistant in the Preparation of the Child” (All Levels) (AM Only)

The Montessori Assistant holds a critical role in the healthy functioning of the classroom system, which is an essential component in assisting the child along the road to normalization. Join us for this session to gain insight into the unseen “whys” of our Montessori work and get tips on the “whats” and “hows” involved in the child–adult–environment triangle. Participants will come away informed, inspired, and invigorated with practical tips to support their daily work assisting life in the classroom.

Rosemary Quaranta

Rosemary Quaranta, M.ED., has over 40 years’ experience as a credentialed AMI 3 to 12 teacher and Head of School. She is passionate about Montessori education, student instruction, curriculum development, teacher education, and supporting and mentoring new and experienced teachers. She is currently spending part of her time with the American Montessori Society facilitating Instructor Academy—a course of study for future teacher education program instructors—consulting with Seton Montessori Institute and instructing for the Westside Montessori Teacher Education Program in New York City. She is a frequent global presenter at conferences and enthusiastically shares her passion.

“The Power and Beauty of a Line: Handwriting in the Montessori Classroom” (3 to 6) (Lower Elementary) (AM Only)

This presentation will explore current research on technology; the brain; and the cognitive, motor, and visual benefits of putting pen to paper as children develop “a beautiful hand.” Participants will rediscover their own skills, explore a brief history of handwriting, express thoughts artfully, and view samples of children’s beautiful work. Teachers will return to their classrooms with a renewed passion for handwriting, real lessons and materials that develop the artful exploration of personal style, and resources to continue their work.

Rosemary Quaranta and Jennifer Nolan

“Living in Wonder: Getting Back to Joyful Classrooms” (All Levels) (PM Only)

Living in wonder together is the true work and gift of the Montessori classroom. Wonder is where spontaneous activity is born, purpose is pursued, and curiosity is fueled. And yet, many lose sight of this central goal and approach their role as a guide with either too much control or too little structure, allowing a child to languish where they might otherwise thrive. Dr. Montessori said, “Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.” Through humility, inquiry, shared learning, and spark starting, we can support children in following their natural curiosity through choice, and they will begin to see themselves as their own teacher.

Melissa Romero

Melissa received her B.A. in Psychology from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, specializing in Human Development. She then attended Eastern Michigan University to complete coursework for K to 8th state curriculum. During these earlier years, she had a variety of experiences teaching Spanish to Montessori students from ages 2 to 12 years and elementary-aged children at local public schools. Melissa completed her Montessori I and II endorsements in 2000 and 2004, respectively. Having been involved in Montessori education as a guide for over 25 years, she taught students from ages 2 to 14. A true lifelong learner, Melissa completed a Social Emotional Learning Facilitator certification and a 200-hour yoga instructor certification. With a continuing thirst for knowledge and a deeper understanding of how she can support true change in the world, she is currently completing an additional 300-hour trauma-informed yoga instructor certification and will be certified by December 2024. Melissa will also begin pursuing a Master of Education in Transformative Teaching in Leadership in January 2025.

“Reigniting Passion for Practical Life and Grace and Courtesy in the Second Plane of Development” (Lower and Upper Elementary) (Administration) (AM and PM)

Get inspired to co-create a community culture of purposeful activity during the Elementary years! Dr. Montessori's vision of purposeful activity that supports a sense of responsibility, independence, and meaningful contribution can be a joyful part of "everyday living" for all planes of development. By incorporating equitable practices in an accessible way for your specific classroom, your students will discover how exciting these experiences can be. Watch the confidence levels of your 6 to 12-year-old learners grow, as there is no limit to the imagination and creativity that can be incorporated into the essential foundation of the Montessori Method.

Rachel Montgomery, Heather Stropp, and Brooklyn Willett

Rachel Montgomery, B.A., M.A., is a Lead Toddler teacher at Daycroft School in Ann Arbor, MI, where she established the toddler program in 2018 and has been teaching in Montessori schools for 14 years. Rachel is AMS credentialed (Infant and Toddler). Heather Stropp, CDA, is an Associate Toddler teacher at Daycroft School in Ann Arbor, MI. She has taught as a lead and associate toddler teacher for over 24 years. Heather is MACTE credentialed (Infant and Toddler). Brooklyn Willett, BA, is an Associate Toddler teacher at Daycroft School in Ann Arbor, MI. She has a focus in environmental education and has taught in toddler and preschool for over 4 years.

“Building a Collaborative and Supportive Teaching Team” (Toddler) (AM and PM)

Educating and caring for young children in a Montessori classroom requires the collaboration and support of a team of adults in order to meet the diverse needs of each child. Lead teachers, associates, and assistants will explore strategies for establishing fulfilling roles, effective communication, and goals within your teaching team, and they will develop a framework for intentionally integrating grace and courtesy into the practice of working as a teaching team.

Douglas Adams, VP SBA Lending Comerica Bank

As a Vice President in Comerica Bank’s SBA Lending department since 2005, Douglas serves as a product expert on the SBA 7(a), SBA 504, and SBA Express loan programs, as well as for the USDA "B & I" rural guarantee loan guarantee program. In the past 19 years, Douglas has been the top producer in Comerica's loan department, with a closed loan volume in the past four years alone exceeding \$128 Million. Douglas received his Ph.D. with distinction from the University of Louisville’s College of Business and Public Administration in 1996, where he was awarded the Graduate Dean's Citation for his dissertation on “Site Selection Variables That Influence Business Location Decisions.” In 1992, Douglas received his Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Toledo, where he served as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. While enrolled at Toledo, Douglas won a competitive scholarship in 1992 to matriculate at the “Harvard of China,” Beijing University, where he lived, taught, and travelled for five months. In 1989, he received his B.A. degree from The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

SBA Loan Program Overview (All Levels) (AM only)

Drawing on Douglas’s 25 years of experience at Comerica Bank (including 19 years of SBA lending experience), this presentation will highlight three fundamental SBA loan products (SBA 7(a), SBA 504, and SBA Express) and provide examples of the advantages of SBA loan products, discuss how and why this loan product is frequently used for "change of ownership" financing, and explain why all SBA lenders are not the same.

Farah Malik

Farah Malik is a dedicated Montessori educator with 12 years of experience teaching students from preschool through 5th grade in a Montessori setting. She co-founded and ran a successful 3-6 Montessori program. She currently is employed at WISE Academy where she is teaching 4th grade. She has had experience at several schools, including Crescent Academy International, Beverly Hills Academy, Schoolhouse Montessori and Iqra Montessori Academy. With a strong background in teaching and administration, Farah is committed to fostering collaboration among educators and families to enhance student development. Farah holds a bachelor's degree in professional communication & behavioral development. She is currently pursuing a master's in curriculum instruction & leadership. She is 3-6 Montessori certified and is dedicated to promoting Montessori principles that encourage independence, critical thinking, and a love of learning.

Behavior Management Strategies in a Montessori Classroom (PM Only) (3-6) (Lower and Upper Elementary)

Classroom management is foundational to create an environment conducive to learning, personal growth, and positive social interactions. Fostering an environment that helps with learning offers many benefits for students and teachers. Farah will discuss strategies and provide practical solutions for creating positive discipline and respect between the children we serve and the adults in the room. She will give an overview of the 3-step behavior modifier influenced by Chick Moorman and the Montessori approach to positive discipline in the classroom. Participants will be encouraged to share their personal experiences and classroom management strategies.