

The end of the 2017-2018 School Year is upon us!



The students' last day is Thursday, May 31st. The staff will be here Friday, June 1st to break down the classrooms. The school will be closed until the first week of July. Messages and administrative team emails will be checked periodically during that time but not on a regular basis!



Do you have stress at mealtimes or worry about your children's food choices?

If anyone is looking for a great speech therapist and/or feeding specialist, I highly recommend Holly Knotowicz. She has a private practice <http://pickyeaters.co/> outside of her work at Children's Hospital. We have worked

with Holly for over four years with Eliana (who has extreme food challenges due to health conditions) but also with Desmond who has no underlying conditions but used to be a very (very) picky eater and he is now 7 and eats most foods. She is amazing with kids and incredibly talented at working through speech and food challenges.

Holly is a certified speech language pathologist who specializes in the complex field of feeding assessment and therapy. Whether it is home therapy or school visits, she believes in supporting her patients and their family as a whole to make mealtimes efficient and fun.

The key to Holly's approach is her, "no stress, decrease anxiety, no pressure, making mealtimes fun" style. Her belief is that children need to feel safe and secure, and in order to earn their trust families need to be at mealtimes together. The right feeding support and fit to your family's values is imperative to your child's feeding success.

Contact: hollyknot@me.com

Please feel free to contact Sara Yelapaala with any questions.



Grateful, Learned, Accomplished, Delight "I am GLAD you're with me today."

by Claire Jackson

Our lives pass by moment by moment, some moments filled with delight, some with the mundane, some with mystery, some with challenges, some full of joy and pain. This school year has flown by, but the moments in between the start and the now coming to an end have all been valuable in their own way. The staff has focused a great deal on mindfulness in our own lives, our workplace, and our classrooms. We have had the opportunity to work together at our staff retreat, attend various conferences, diversity workshops, and listen to key-note speakers. We continue to learn about the benefits of reflection and practiced meditation and resiliency together. Gaining more resources that let us move through challenges with strength and clarity. Gaining insight as we look within to understand ourselves and use what we learn to bring our unique perspectives to our environment. "It is not enough for the teacher to love the child. She must first love and understand the universe. She must prepare herself, and truly work at it."

~Maria Montessori

Most of all we have had the honor of working with each of the children at Children's Garden. We work with you as parents and caregivers to embrace this life with all its mystifying joys and questions, to foster balance, empathy, growth, and self-regulation as we guide the children moment by moment. We observe and work with the children to follow the simple instructions for life... to pay attention, to be astonished, and to share about it. This collaboration allows us to be interconnected in our daily interactions. "We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity". ~Maria Montessori

Psychology Today states that "Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention

on the present. When you are mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to experience."

The Montessori classroom environment and interactions can promote mindfulness through out the day. The flow of the individual presentations requires the attention of the child and the adult to be focused on the immediate present. The built-in control of error in the Montessori materials and activities consistently bring the child's focus back to center. Children are grounded by the routine and predictability of the work cycle. The development of the child's independence through choice forces immediate mindfulness by the teacher while we follow the child's interest right in the moment.

One of the most important parts of the Montessori curriculum is *Grace and Courtesy* lessons. These practices create a mindful community within the classroom, offering children the social awareness skills that promote calm, respectful, and purposeful interaction. These lessons help build communication and harmony at school and at home. Exercises we do almost daily in the classroom such as 'Making Silence' and 'Walking on the Line' help the child to focus thoughts inward and be aware of their body within the space of the environment. It helps the child become fully conscious of his surroundings. During the sensitive period of ages 3-6 years old, a child moves from a mostly unconscious mind to the conscious mind. Meaningful interactions and conscious work that incorporates the senses, both mind and body, with increased periods of concentration, provide a child with experiences that prepare them well beyond the classroom walls and on their way to a purposeful and fulfilled life.

A practice I do with my own family almost daily is "GLAD". It also works well in the classroom to reflect on our day. I say to the children in my life (my own, yours, ours) "I am GLAD you are here with me today." Everyday acknowledging and thanking them for the vitality they bring into my life.

And then we practice this simple activity:

"Today I am Grateful for..." ,

"Today I Learned..."

"Today I Accomplished..."

"Today _____ gave me Delight."

Keep it simple. Think just for the day... What you are grateful for? What have you learned? What have you accomplished? And something that brought you delight! A recent example from my family during our evening "daily reflection"... Our oldest son said "Today I am grateful for some screen time, because some days I don't get any. And today I tried black cherry ice cream and I learned it's yummy! I accomplished finishing a race with my friends at

school today during recess time. And I felt delight when we all finished and we were smiling and we worked hard!"

Being **Grateful** is feeling appreciation. Gratitude is a practice for recognizing and giving thanks for even the smallest of things or happenings in our lives. "Gratitude can be an emotion that is a memory of love." I heard it put so beautifully at a Montessori conference earlier this spring.

Learning is to gain or acquire knowledge or skill by experience, study and practice. And just by being curious, it allows you to see that each day is full of new things.

Accomplishment is an achievement, completion, something you do well as a result of effort and practice. But accomplishment doesn't always have to be something grand, it can be an act of care for yourself or someone else. Or an attainable goal you set for yourself.

Delight is a strong feeling of happiness or joy; a source of pleasure and excitement. One benefit of delight is it can shift the focus from ourselves to others and in turn bring us a sense of joy.

Try not to search too hard for the words. Maybe substitute "we" for "I". Maybe work together as a family to come up with the sentences, or just pick one to focus on for the day. This purpose is to "See More Good" in our lives. You may find that it is impossible to be "unhappy" while practicing gratitude... if we stay in the moment.

Within the definitions above, the word 'practice' is used. Practice is the actual application of a method or belief. We are the child's guide in practice, behavior, and language... we can model this practice of "seeing more good", the behavior of respect, and our own use of language because words have stories behind them, they get into the very threads of our lives; so we must be purposeful by honoring our way with words through kindness and compassion.

Maria Montessori wrote, "Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future." We honor the gift of time with young children, working with them to be healthy, balanced, problem solvers; independent but confident to ask for support and work with others even when we have differences. We learn alongside children, if we are mindful; as they are often our windows back to our true selves, a mirror that can force us to look at our own practices. We can look at the child as our own little "mindfulness teacher". Their presence and actions offer us all opportunities for growth.

I have attached a poem that I hope will remind you (and your family) to

stay curious, practice gratitude, and help you notice the simple delight in each day.

A Gift Of Gratitude
by Brother David Steindl-Rast

You think this is just
another day in your *life*?
It's not just another day;
it's the one day that
is given to you...
today

It's *given* to you. It's a gift.
It's the only gift that you
have right now, and the
one appropriate response
is gratefulness.

If you do nothing else but to
cultivate that response to the great
gift that this unique day is,
if you learn to respond
as if it were the first day
of your life,
and the very last day,
then you will have spent
this day *very well*.

Begin by *opening* your
eyes and be surprised that you
have eyes you can open,
that incredible array of colors
that is constantly offered to
us for pure enjoyment.

Look at the sky.

We so rarely look at the sky.
We so rarely note how different
it is from *moment to*
moment with clouds coming
and going.

We just think of the weather, and
even of the weather we don't think
of all the many nuances of weather.

We just think of good weather
and bad weather.

This day right now has

unique weather, maybe a
kind that will never exactly
in that form come again.

That formation of clouds in the sky will
never be the same that it is right now.

Open your eyes. Look at that.

Look at the *faces*
of people whom you meet.

Each one has an *incredible*
story behind their face, a story
that you could never fully fathom,
not only their own story,
but the story of their ancestors.

We all go back so far.

And in this *present*
moment on this day, all the
people you meet, all that life
from generations and from so
many places all over the world,
flows together and meets you
here like a life-giving
water, if you only open your
heart and drink.

Open your heart
to the incredible gifts that
civilization gives to us.

You flip a switch
and there is
electric light.

You turn a faucet and
there is warm water and cold water—
and drinkable water.

It's a gift that millions and millions
in the world will never experience.

So these are just a few of
an enormous number
of gifts to which you can
open your heart.

And so I wish for you that
you would open your heart
to all these blessings and let
them *flow* through you,
that everyone whom you will meet
on this day will be blessed by *you*;

just by your eyes,
by your smile, by your touch—
just by your presence.
Let the gratefulness overflow
into blessing all around you,
and then it will really be
a good day.



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