



Hampton Roads International Montessori School



Coming Up In April:

- April 3rd-7th: Spring Break: School is closed
- April 15th: Spring Fair at the Hampton Campus 10:30-1:30
- April 19th: Progress Reports
- April 16th-April 18th: SAIS Accreditation Team Visit
- April 21st: Professional Day: No school for students

Coming Up In May:

- May 19th: Professional Day: No school for students
- May 29th: Memorial Day: School is closed

Coming Up In June:

- June 5th: Kindergarten graduation and 6th grade Moving On Ceremony
- June 6th: Last day of School; 11:45 dismissal for all students
- June 7th-9th: Professional Days: No school for students
- June 12th: First day of Summer Session
- June 19th: Juneteenth: School is closed

Dear HRI Montessori Community,

Welcome back from Spring Break! This is always such a time of renewed energy and excitement in the world, and you can feel it in the lesson plans the teachers have prepared and the way the students share their ideas and joy. The focus on observing the changes and growth in nature and the environment around them, and how those changes occur fascinates them and instills a love of learning and the motivation to find out more. It also instills a sense of purpose in being a force of nature, making things happen in the world around them; becoming a contributing part of their community.

As our students returned from spring break, those at our Newport News campus observed many improvements on the playgrounds. These changes couldn't have happened without Ms. Jane's initiative and the help of many of our families and staff volunteering over spring break, as well as with the donation of materials from Luck Stone.

Our Portrait of a Graduate, the goals we have for a student attending HRI Montessori, speaks to the characteristics our students embody when they leave us as 6th graders, but are instilled throughout their time as toddlers, children's house students, and elementary students. One of these goals is, "**Active alumni who cherish their time at HRIMS and contribute to their home, school and community.**" We would like to thank the adults in our community who are modeling this for our students, who are showing them how important this is in creating the world in which we all take an active role in making our environment a rich and inviting place to live.

I would like to thank another group of volunteers you may be encountering in the next two weeks, our accreditation visiting team. These are a group of individuals that are uncompensated for their work, volunteering their time and effort to serve on a team visit.

Usually, the accreditation process involves a year-long self-study of all aspects of the school, including governance, health and safety, facilities, curriculum, etc. culminating in an extensive report and a team visit from the accrediting body. Our accreditation study was done in 2019-2020, a joint accreditation with SAIS and MSA, two accrediting bodies with one joint team set for a visit in the fall of 2020. As we all know, Covid derailed most plans for that year, including our accreditation visit. MSA continued with our accreditation, conducting a hybrid in-person and virtual visit and awarding us accreditation. SAIS put the accreditation visit on hold at that time. SAIS will be conducting their accreditation visit on April 16th-18th. The five team members that serve on the team will be coming from different schools and different states. Their chair has already visited our school and the team and chair have spent countless hours assessing our documents, self-study, and the standards and indicators related to accreditation. They will work tirelessly from Sunday through Tuesday at our schools and continue through the rest of the week compiling reports. They will observe in our classrooms, speak with our staff, students, parents, and board members, assess our facilities, observe our procedures.

They will become a part of our lives and enjoy all that we are. They will celebrate all that we do for and with your children each day. They will get to see their smiles, revel in their accomplishments and triumphs, and bask in their joy.

These individuals are chosen to be on our team because they have expertise in different areas. They are not all from Montessori schools. Some have expertise in finance areas, some in facilities. They were chosen to give suggestions in areas in which we are looking to grow and improve.

We are excited to have them with us. We look forward to having them share their observations, their recommendations and their commendations. We are so grateful that they are willing to donate their time to such a worthy cause: to help us become an even better school for your children than we are.

Having served on many of these teams myself, I can speak personally to the time, effort and energy these team members are giving to serve our school, in addition to the time away from their own schools and families at this busy time of year. I ask that you please welcome them and thank them for their service to our school when you see them.

I want to end by focusing on our Upper Elementary student volunteers. They sign up each week to volunteer to help in our toddler classrooms. They read to them, play outside, help with transitions. They are mentors and friends. They do not have to volunteer, but they see the difference it makes in the faces of the toddlers when they enter the classroom and the appreciation in the eyes of the teachers. They are also working on collecting clothing for children in need. It is with these types of activities we help to instill the values that create the adults that give back to their communities as shown above. There are many opportunities for students to volunteer in the community. If you are able, please search out and participate in some of these activities as a family. Let's create the world we want for the future.

-Ms. Michelle



Toddler Community

How can we help children cultivate peace in the Montessori classroom and at home, in their own lives, when interacting with others, and within their broader communities? Peaceful education is an essential component of the Montessori curriculum and children's emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and responsibility. Dr. Maria Montessori believed that *"the education of children is the key to future peace."*

All of us, children included, have good days and bad days, which influence our behaviors and social-emotional capabilities at home and school. Social-Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognize feelings and emotions within ourselves and our relationships with others, as well as reading and understanding how others are feeling; it's an incredibly valuable practical life skill that takes time and intention to develop.

While tantrums are normal behaviors in a child's development, it is important to understand where anger or strong emotions come from and how even children can be taught to manage what they're feeling. Sudden anger or rage, feeling out of control, having limited communication options, being tired or overtired, hunger, and/or overstimulation can all factor into a child's brain regulation and how they respond to everyday moments.

For example, while bedtime may not be your child's favorite part of their day, you can ensure peace by creating and sticking to a consistent routine. If your child is refusing to put away their toys when it is time for bed, they may become frustrated. You can use the "As soon as..." method; this distracts from the issue yet gives some power to the child, who may be exhausted by that time in the day and thus more prone to strong emotions. Try saying a phrase to your child such as, "I can see you don't want to go to bed and it is bedtime. Do you want one story or two stories as soon as your pajamas are on?" Giving the child a choice among the things they can control will allow them to feel more in control and therefore, more at peace. Whenever possible children should be given safe options to choose from within the boundaries of your routine: what pair of pajamas would you like to wear tonight, which 2 books should we read, do you want to put the toothpaste on your toothbrush or would you like help?

Actively engaging your child in their daily routine should happen throughout the day as often as possible. A family routine and set structure helps children know what to expect from the day and providing warnings ahead of changes or transitions can assist them in preparing themselves (and their emotions). We invite you to help implement a morning and night routine so you can further develop peace in your home.



In addition to creating consistent routines, you can create a designated peace corner or utilize a peace rose/dove (both of which are used in HRMIS Montessori classrooms) to reinforce listening and active resolution skills at home. A tranquil area and peace symbol your child can use when they need to calm down allows them to properly use their social-emotional intelligence to regulate their body and emotions, and then better communicate their feelings and needs. You can also model this by taking some deep breaths, naming the emotion, and offering options of how they can resolve what they are feeling; "I can see that you are feeling upset and frustrated. Would you like a hug or would you like to take a moment in the peace corner to take a few deep breaths and calm down?" Using few words and sentences allows them to take time to process without becoming more overwhelmed with the process. Walking away and letting them have time to work through their emotions alone allows them to develop the resiliency they need to feel calm.





Children's House

Spring is here! What a wonderful time of year to explore nature's gifts of renewal and rebirth. I enjoy observing the children's natural curiosity noticing the simplest things and having the instinctive desire to care for their environment and their world. During this time of year, they see many events that we as adults take for granted noticing the tree blossoms, bright colorful flowers, and the larger number of birds seeking food and nesting. This article is a great way for you and your family to reconnect with nature and the outdoors this spring!

Bird-Watching with Young Children: Listen and look for neighborhood birds.



"Spring came again to the northern garden and so did the bluebirds." —R. Bruce Horsfall Bluebirds Seven

The dawn chorus of birds is a universal sign of spring, and you might listen for it with your early-rising children - even from inside your home. Morning is a perfect time to hear birds as they greet the rising sun. It's an ideal way to introduce yourself and your children to bird-watching, and, it is easier than it seems. Surprisingly, children are able to become enthusiastic participants in no time at all.

Awareness Breeds Curiosity: Birds are often in the landscape and we tend to take them for granted. When you're out walking or playing in the park with your children, begin to look for birds. Are the seagulls attracted to some crumbs in the parking lot? Has a sparrow landed on the swing set? Listening and looking is enough. Once you've noticed the varying calls and sighted the flitting and flickering of the birds in your neighborhood, you and your children might also be curious to know more. What kind of bird is that? Where does it live? What does it look like?

To find answers to these questions, get a simple bird guide. It's easiest to start with a version that includes just the birds likely to be found in your area, such as Local Birds® which is a laminated six-fold guide with bird pictures, names, and brief descriptions. The Bird Fandex is also an easy way to identify birds.

Better than a Webcam: As spring erupts in your neighborhood, look for birds in search of twigs and grass as they build their nests. A few weeks later, listen for the new hungry chirping of the babies and watch mom and dad go back and forth to the nest with food. Your child will become curious as this bird-watching becomes part of everyday living.

Maybe you'll be lucky enough to find a nest nearby that's easy to observe. When my son was four, we were fortunate to discover a robin's nest right outside our stairway window. We were in daily awe of the process from mom sitting on the eggs to the hatching, feeding, and eventually flying away. It was an amazing life lesson that unfolded right before our eyes.

A neighbor of mine recently heard much squawking and flitting by a thrush in her front yard. Every time someone came or went from the front door, the bird would try to do what she could to keep the intruders away from her babies. Mama bird had built her nest in the wisteria vine that clung to the side of the house.

You may be tempted to go to the internet to see such miracles, thanks to a conveniently placed webcam. However, for young children it's best to refrain because it's only a picture of what is really happening. More importantly, remember that small children have no point of reference if they have never experienced the process in real life - older children can understand if they've had previous exposure, but they, too, invariably lose interest due to the remoteness of the picture. We are accustomed to learning from screens, but there's nothing like experiencing nature first-hand.

Learning from the Senses: There's so much bird-watching, or "bird-listening," that can happen just with our ears: the honking of the Canadian geese migrating; the noisy chattering of roosting birds; the drumming sound of a woodpecker's beak against the hollow tree trunk; the squawking of the seagulls as they compete for the tasty garbage; the sad hoo-ah, hoo-hoo-hoo of the mourning dove. You and your children will discover your familiar neighborhood bird sounds such as the cawing crow or the quacking duck. No need to locate the birds, just listen to the sounds. Perhaps you'll learn to mimic them or identify them. Even in the most urban environment birds are there. If your child is interested, you may wish to attract more birds to your home by putting out a bird bath or bird house. Let your children lead you, and as the interest evolves, consider some of the following bird-watching activities.

- Start naming birds by looking at pictures of birds so they can be identified when found.
- Make simple bird feeders. A few grains of bird seed on the window sill of the tallest building in the city will attract birds.
- A basic pair of binoculars can help your child find features of a bird in a nearby tree or bush. (It's not easy for children to learn to use them, so minimal magnification works best. Sometimes just a toy telescope works well.)
- Take a short bird-watching hike or go to the nearby lake or shore to watch birds.
- The Audubon Society has centers in many cities and provides bird-watching workshops and summer day camps in some locations. They are a good resource for simple bird-watching guides.

You'll be amazed to see your children become natural and curious bird-watchers this spring.

"Thus the child, having acquired the power of distinguishing one thing from another, has laid the foundations of the intelligence." —Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education

—by Jane M. Jacobs, M.A.,



I hope everyone will have safe, fun and relaxing spring break. Before you and your family venture on trips to familiar or unfamiliar places with your children, take time to share grace and courtesy manners and the verbal expectations you wish your child to have and by sharing this and what you expect helps children understand and be better prepared. Modeling the behavior you share is a "priceless" gift we can give to guide them through these learning and eventful moments in life as a child. Here is another resourceful article before heading out into the great big world we live in!

Out in the Community: Socializing with Your Children: Learning to feel confident in many situations.

"By teaching children what they need to learn early in life, they may be better able to cope with the problems of their culture than by learning late the basic rules when little time is allotted for their mastery."

—Nancy Rambusch Learning How to Learn

We often overlook how important it is for our children to have experiences with people in the community. Perhaps because we are so focused on keeping our children safe, happy, and healthy, we sometimes forget to teach them the skills they need to feel confident and competent in interacting with others.

During a recent conversation with a counselor friend, I learned she was working with a group of young people who wanted and needed to develop appropriate social skills. These millennials, aged 19 to 30, had learned to communicate with friends via computer games, emails, and texts. They mostly talked with friends via social media, which minimized daily human interactions. This mode of communication seemed normal until they realized they were uncomfortable in many face-to-face social situations.

Young Children: At home children quickly learn what is expected of them. They know what to do when riding in the car, while eating at the dinner table, or when greeting a guest. When we take children out into the community, we so often bring them along with little thought of what they might learn or how they could do things for themselves with a little preparation beforehand.

In the Montessori classroom, children have the opportunity to repeatedly practice the lessons of grace and courtesy. They can also practice these skills in public, but oftentimes we take over without thinking, even when our children are able to speak for themselves.

Do your children know how to ask the librarian how to find a book and then check it out? Can they order for themselves in a restaurant? Can they find items for you in the grocery store, asking a clerk for help if necessary? These examples are all ways we can empower children to become more socially comfortable in public.

Special Events: If you are taking your children to church or to the symphony, you can prepare them by explaining that this is a time when they must sit quietly. By telling them what to expect and watch for in advance, they will have enough knowledge to be interested and curious about the new and unique event. Imagine the many things to learn at a symphony even before the performance - where the exits are and how they are indicated, how the tickets identify the appointed seat, how people look and talk with one another, that the lights get dimmed, and then the conductor appears before the music starts.

Before choosing such an outing, take into account your child's age and individual temperament, which could make it easier or harder to sit and focus. Be prepared to tiptoe out of temple or a movie. Some find it helpful to shorten the event for youngsters. For example, prepare to go to the museum to see only one or two specific paintings or sculptures that they have been introduced to beforehand.

Do not minimize the value of allowing your children to watch, listen, and observe others. Just in case they become restless, you could take a couple of items to quietly occupy them, such as a book or pencil with a small notebook. In a situation that does not demand silence, you could play a game of tic-tac-toe or I Spy with them.

You might be tempted to give your child your phone when they are fidgety, but technology places a child in a separate world. Children generally become engrossed and quiet while engaged in technology, but don't really learn how to behave in real life. Some situations, like traveling on an airplane, might call for extreme distractions, especially for younger children. If you do resort to electronics, be aware that children often have difficulty transitioning back to reality, so set limits in advance. For example, alert your child that after two cartoons, it will be time to read a book or have a snack.

Life Skills: Learning the rules of behavior in new situations makes life easier for everyone. Even adults feel more secure when they know what to expect. A friend recently talked with me about her nervous feelings anticipating her first black-tie business affair. Children also take comfort in being coached by parents when facing novel life experiences. Discuss in advance what will happen at the bar mitzvah, swimming lesson, or class field trip.

No matter what you say, children are more likely to do as you do, not as you say. Your body language and behavior are worth a thousand words. Lecturing and nagging are never as effective as being a role model.

Children can learn that certain situations require them to behave in very mature ways. In the very busy waiting room of a hospital lab, for example, I saw a father waiting with his two sons, approximately five and seven years old. The boys were quietly sitting, obviously interested in the comings and goings of the diverse group of people. They somehow knew how to wait patiently, and were complimented by their father when it was finally their turn.

Learning how the social world functions helps prepare children to interact appropriately and politely with others. Broadening your children's experiences expands their knowledge, creativity, and adaptability, and enables you to have wonderful experiences together as a family outside the home. As Maria Montessori expressed in *The Secret of Childhood*, "Children are no longer the sole concern of their parents to be paraded around in their Sunday best. No, they are now recognized as a part of the society in which they live."

—by Jane M. Jacobs, M.A.,





Lower Elementary



Hello Lower Elementary families.

The elementary years in Montessori are truly magical. The whole universe becomes their classroom. The elementary learner is a pioneer, an explorer and master of his or her own potential. Their journey maybe long, but whilst it is filled with opportunities for discovery, self-direction and independence pacing it will be rich rewarding and forever influential.

Our children enjoyed preparing for the international pot luck. They collaborated together creating informative posters of the countries they choose to display. They discovered new foods , animals, festivals and much more and eagerly displayed their work for you all to see.

March began with the life cycles of plants, as our children truly enjoy learning about the beginning of spring through planting, experiments and observations. They continue with geography lessons concentrating on the north, south and southwest regions of United States of America. Their natural curiosity leads to research and presentations that takes form from their interest in the area's biomes, history and geography.

Dr Seuss week was enjoyed by all in our classrooms. We discussed and read various books by Dr Seuss. Children practiced rhyming words and illustrated stories focusing on beginning, middle and endings. It was interesting to hear their thoughts on certain books and the depth of knowledge they previously had on these books were commendable. Thank you to Ms. Claudia for planning the school-wide activities!

Language is learned throughout the classroom. We particularly focused this month on writing stories. Our children created stories, focusing on the flow of the story, ensuring they had a beginning, middle and ending. We all worked together creating humorous, descriptive and imaginative stories which they all enjoyed. In math we continue to explore multiples in various capacities. Our younger students are gaining confidence as they continue working with addition, subtraction and multiplying using the stamp game, small bead frame and our bead cabinet. Older students have been introduced to fractions, division and money problems.

We have been emphasizing the importance of independence in our classrooms. Dr Montessori believed strongly that unneeded help deprives the child of learning opportunities. When children are given time, space, and appropriate freedom they realize they are competent problem-solvers with every reason to have confidence in their own abilities. Independence comes in different levels in our elementary classroom. Children learn to run class meetings and help to maintain the environment by doing chores. For elementary children Dr. Montessori also emphasized to gain independence by leaving the classroom and interacting with the wider community. Therefore, we help our students gain necessary skills through "going out". Students help with the schedule of the day, guidelines to follow and what we may need to bring.

These are all practical life skills that result in increased self-confidence and help children develop into competent, successful, self-confident individuals. Our field trips have been a learning experience which included having fun. Students always have a new found interest in subjects and are energized into making presentations.

Lastly, we would like to thank all parents for your input during the parent teacher conferences. Your positivity and enthusiasm is greatly appreciated.



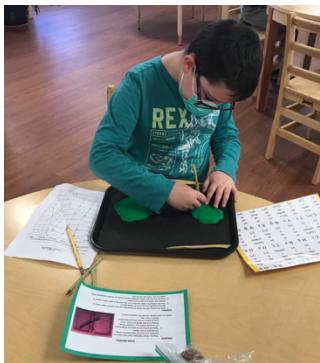
Upper Elementary

Hello Upper Elementary families! We hope you're all doing well as the weather starts to warm up, and we're ever excited to bring you into the fold on what we have been up to as of late in our classroom!

Our math studies have been ramping up recently, and we are in the process of discussing fraction operations to varying degrees across all students in our class. Our students are learning how to compute basic mathematical operations with fractions, addition and subtraction of like denominators, multiplication and division of fractions and whole numbers, as well addition and subtraction of unlike denominators, with more to come. We are so grateful to have such voracious math learners in our class, it is always such a treat for us as well as our class, to have our group be so passionate about the material they are being taught.



Language studies in Upper EI have also been reaching exciting levels, as our class is in a unique stage of bridging reading and writing education at the moment. We are on the tail-end of finishing the writing process with our persuasive writing pieces and are quickly hurtling towards the final-draft and publishing phases of our process. We are so excited for you to see the interesting topics that have been chosen and the engaging writing pieces your students are producing. Our class is also starting another round of literature circle reading groups, something we are as excited for as our students are! It is great to see students so excited about reading together!



We also, as usual, have been in-depth in hands-on activities to give our students more experiential learning for the topics we touch on. In our cultural studies, students have had the opportunity to learn the ukulele to simulate ancient Greek musical learning, as well as use clay and styluses to mimic ancient greek wax-coated writing tablets. In combination with our chemistry-based science studies, students have had many science experiments to get their hands on as well, most recently regarding mixtures and solutions. We are also taking time to focus on a broader range of practical-life skills to allow our class to be successful with a wider breadth of knowledge beyond simply academics. We have begun working with our students to teach them basic embroidery and hand-sewing techniques, with the

hopes of letting them create their own masterpieces utilizing these skills in the future. These skills require additional focus, fine motor skills, attention to detail and design skills. They also allow students to develop an appreciation for those skills in their peers. These skills are so important in brain development and in social skill development.

Until next time, we will leave you with a quote from Dr. Montessori herself; "The child is endowed with unknown powers, which can guide us to a radiant future. If what we really want is a new world, then education must take as its aim the development of these hidden possibilities."

Ms. Meg & Ms. Linsky



Newport News and Hampton Campus Updates

Spring Fair on Saturday April 15th! 10:30-1:30

Hampton Campus at 23 Semple Farm Rd.

Parking is limited and overflow is available across Neil Armstrong Parkway at the daycare. Carpooling is recommended. Please do not park people in, as this is a “come and go” event.

Bounce houses, crafts, face painting, petting zoo, pony rides are available at no cost.

Food will be available for purchase.

Thank you to our Spring Break Playground Spruce Up volunteers!



Thank you to all those families who donated shelves for our library project at our Hampton Campus! We have received over 500 books from the Newport News Library for our Hampton School Library! Thank you to Ms. Janet for coordinating this monumental effort for the students at Hampton! We will begin the process of sorting and cataloging the books to have them available soon! We are accepting donations of gently used children’s picture books and chapter books as well as resource books.

Please remember that you can help support HRIMS by doing your every day shopping by:

[purchasing gift cards through the RAISE RIGHT program \(raiseright.com\)](https://www.raiseright.com)

on your phone or computer and use them to pay for your shopping or give them as gifts!

Hundreds of stores give percentages up to 15% to HRIMS! Stores like Amazon, Lowe’s, Target, Walmart, Macy’s, your favorite grocery stores, and so many more! It only takes a minute to choose Hampton Roads International Montessori School as the nonprofit you will be supporting with your gift card purchases now and throughout the year.

Don’t forget our Educational Improvement **Tax Credit Scholarship Program**! You receive a 65% tax credit on your VA taxes on donations over \$500! More information can be found on the www.hrimontessori.org website! Help others obtain a Montessori education and help to keep our community diverse in all ways!

Both businesses and individuals can take advantage of this great program!

Donations are greatly appreciated! A wish list is also available on our website for new or gently used items.