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From the outside looking in...An owner's perspective.

On any given day in a Montessori classroom there are dozens of different learning moments happening at any given time. As a Montessori teacher, when you are in the middle of a Montessori cycle, your focus is on the lessons you are presenting. At the same time you have a broad sense of what is happening in the classroom. That being said, you are not always able to witness the beauty of the process. You are focused on the specifics of the presentations and the order in which you need to present to your specific students, meeting them where they are. Sometimes you are able to be “on the outside looking in” As an owner I have been blessed with this opportunity to witness the teachers in our classroom facilitating academic progress for our students.

A child does not just start reading one day. There is a strategic, detailed, and beautiful process that takes place on the journey to reading. A child begins in Practical Life, working to develop concentration, attention span, independence, and fine motor skills. As these skills develop, they begin to move into other areas of the classroom. Going through sensitive periods, as the while growing emotionally and socially. They develop strong relationships with their teachers, which enables them to have the confidence and the knowledge to act as role models to the younger children in the classroom.

As a child is ready to move into the language area of the classroom, they are introduced to works like pin poking, metal insets, and the sandpaper letters. Pin poking and metal insets; continue to strengthen the hand and the pincer grasp for later printing. The sandpaper letters introduce the children to the phonetic sounds of the alphabet. Had the children not first had the time in Practical Life to develop skills like fine motor and an understanding of working from left to right, they would not be prepared for these new language works. The children continue tracing the sandpaper letters, pronouncing the sounds. “Bbbb..boat” As they master the phonetic sounds, they are then introduced to the movable alphabet. Through the

use of the moveable alphabet they begin identifying beginning sounds and then building short phonetic words, such as dog. The process continues, next they will be shown word and picture matching. Sounding out the word and matching it to the corresponding image. Throughout this process they are practicing printing letters on both a chalkboard and in their printing journals. No comes short phonetic stories. The teacher recognizes when I child is ready for this, and provides the child with a book to read. They sit with their teacher.and, read a book. What an accomplishment. They were guided through the Montessori process for reading and attained success. This may be what the academic process looked like, however these were not the only “things” that happened through this process.

From their beginning days in practical life, to moving into language and tracing metal insets, to learning the phonetic sounds, to reading there were many magical moments within. I have not yet mentioned these magical moments. These moments are the true beauty of learning. There were moments of pride; smiles and puffed up chests when they mastered an activity. Moments of joy; “I’m a big kid, I know my sounds!” Moments of trust; when their teachers show they have faith in the child’s abilities and so in turn they have faith in themselves. Moments of love; hugs of love, hugs of thanks, and hugs of pride to their teachers.

Without these moments, the academics would not be as strong, as rewarding, or as influential. No one can teach a child without first developing a relationship with them. Our Montessori teachers are attuned to their students. Knowing when a child is tired upset, excited, motivated. By knowing their students, they adapt to the need of each individual child.

All of this instills a love of learning in the child, a foundation of learning. This is a gift the child can carry with them always.