

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, JANUARY 24 - 25

Miami, Florida



LETTING THE CHILD LEAD US

Dr. Montessori taught us to "Follow the Child" and in order to do that, we must let go of our own expectations, and allow the child to lead us based on their particular individual needs. We can then truly guide the child based on what the student is revealing to us. The child's inner wisdom will always guide us in the right direction if we take the time to observe the unique individuals in our care. Let us be their guides and partners on this journey.



DAY 1

Friday, January 24, 2025 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER GEOFFREY BISHOP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATURE CLASSROOM INSTITUTE

"Nature, the First and Essential Environment"

Geoffrey Bishop grew up in Australia completing his education and then decided to educate himself on the world. He backpacked around the world for the next five years visiting mainly rural and off the beaten track places, discovering cultures and the uniqueness of the global planet. He settled in Wisconsin opening an environmental education program, Nature's Classroom Institute (NCI). NCI now serves students from over 100 Montessori schools and across the US. To better understand the child Geoffrey opened a Montessori school on 140 acres in Mukwonago, Wisconsin, blending his expertise in Environmental Education with the Montessori philosophy creating a beautiful school that serves students from three through high school. Geoffrey is passionate about traveling and supporting the AMS global initiative. He is currently the Executive Director and Founder of Nature's Classroom Institute and Montessori School as well as serving on the AMS Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Chairing the Global Committee and sits on Finance, Executive Committee.

Geoffrey Loves gardening, reading and spending time with his dog Zoey, working on his farm and for those few extra hours a day, working on completing his first book.

In today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, the natural environment often takes a backseat in mainstream education, despite its proven benefits for child development. Numerous studies have shown that a child's connection to nature enhances their ability to focus, concentrate, create, and imagine. Additionally, nature provides far-reaching health benefits, impacting social and emotional well-being as well as physical health. This workshop aims to energize and revitalize teachers, helping them reconnect their students with nature and incorporate the natural world into their curriculum.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER GINA LOFQUIST, M.ED. AMS SENIOR DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

"To Honor the Child "

Gina Lofquist, MEd, serves as the Senior Director of Education and Strategic Initiatives at the American Montessori Society (AMS). In her role, she leads AMS's teacher education initiatives and professional development and, while also driving strategic efforts in research, global outreach, and growth. Gina is deeply committed to building a well-connected and strong Montessori community worldwide. She's all about crafting transformative programs, sparking connections that fuel advocacy and expand Montessori education, and bringing her insights to life through engaging keynotes and presentations.

Her extensive experience includes roles as an early childhood teacher, head of school, teacher educator, university-based program director, and global consultant for public and private schools. Gina's passion lies in expanding Montessori's impact for the benefit of young learners and their communities.

In this interactive workshop, we'll explore the essential Montessori principle of following the child—observing, listening, learning, and responding to each child's unique needs and developmental path. Participants will reflect on how they support a child's innate drive for self-construction within the Montessori ecosystem. Using a critical lens we will explore how all elements of this ecosystem work together both at the micro and macro levels to meet the needs of children and fulfill the vision of Dr. Montessori.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 10:45 a.m. – 12:15p.m.



CAROLYN BOSQUE

"Circle Time Fun in the 3-6 Classroom" Target Audience: Early Childhood

In this interactive circle time workshop, you'll discover fun and creative strategies to transform your 15–20 minute circle time into an engaging experience for both you and your students. I'll share my favorite Circle Time MUSTS—easy ways to incorporate music, movement, and hands—on learning to keep kids excited and focused. You will leave with a handout of song ideas to use in your class, see some video examples from my own classroom to show how these strategies come to life. Also, we will have time for some fun audience participation to put the ideas into action.



ELIZABETH WILLIS, PHD

"Teaching to a Child's Soul: The Bigger Why Behind Teaching" Target Audience: All

In this presentation, we will explore the deeper purpose of education inspired by Maria Montessori's method. Montessori developed her curriculum not only to foster intellectual growth but to nurture the whole child—mind, body, and spirit. By connecting to our own souls as educators, we align with our greater purpose and can authentically connect with the souls of our students. This connection creates a profound sense of belonging and purpose, both for the child and teacher. Participants will learn how soulcentered teaching nurtures empathy, deepens relationships, and cultivates a classroom environment rich in meaning and growth.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.



YVIZ SOUZA

"The Basics of Normalizing a Toddler Environment" Target Audience: Infant/Toddler

In a Montessori toddler environment, normalizing refers to the process through which a new child adapts to the structured, self-directed routines and expectations within the classroom. Initially, children may exhibit behaviors associated with adjustment difficulties—such as impulsivity, distractions, or dependence on teacher assistance—since they are unfamiliar with the environment's routines. Transitioning to normalization involves fostering a child's sense of independence, concentration, and internal discipline. As they begin to trust the structure and rhythm of the classroom, children become more focused and demonstrate a greater capacity for self-control and engagement with the activities around them.

To support normalization, it's essential to create a calm, prepared environment that respects each child's individual pace and developmental needs. Providing consistent routines, clear boundaries, and appropriately challenging tasks helps toddlers gain confidence and independence. Teachers should model behaviors and provide gentle guidance to reinforce the classroom's routines and expectations. Key observations during this period can be crucial in understanding each child's unique adjustment pattern, identifying when extra support is needed, and celebrating each step toward independence.

Regression may occur during this process, often triggered by external changes such as transitions at home, illness, or other disruptions. In these instances, it's important to patiently reinforce established routines and offer extra reassurance as the child works through the adjustment. Regular check-ins with parents and individualized support strategies can be instrumental in minimizing regression and guiding the child back to a path of normalization. These observations and techniques are integral for creating a stable, engaging Montessori environment where children feel empowered to explore, learn, and grow.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.



JUDY DEMPSEY, M.S ROSEMARY RODMAN JANET SHILLER

"Back to. Montessori Basics" Target Audience: All



Join a panel of experienced Montessori educators for an interactive discussion about our Montessori philosophy and going back to the basics in this post–COVID and digital world. We want to disconnect from the digital world and reconnect to our Montessori world. The Montessori basics are as relative today as they were over 100 years ago. We will discuss why it is as important as ever to maintain our trust in the Montessori materials, the prepared environment and the child. Bring your thoughts and questions.





DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

ENLACE EN ESPAÑOL

TATIANA RODRIGUEZ APONTE VERONICA DE PEREZ

"Desarrollando los sentidos: Estrategias para integrar y extender el desarrollo de los cinco sentidos en el Aula Montessori" Target Audience: All



Como sabemos, el area sensorial es un area clave y de suma importancia en nuestro ambiente Montessori, el uso de esta area ayuda al niño no solo a desarrollar los sentidos, —vista, oído, olfato, gusto y tacto—también lo ayuda a concentrarse y aprender a resolver problemas. Este desarrollo va más allá del uso exclusivo de materiales sensoriales tradicionales. Implica crear un ambiente educativo donde las experiencias sensoriales sean parte integral del aprendizaje diario; puede implica crear un entorno educativo dinámico donde las experiencias sensoriales sean parte integral del proceso de aprendizaje y extenderse a cada una de las areas en el aula.

Con este workshop buscamos presentar diferentes estrategias que pueden ayudar a las guías y asistentes, a extender actividades y lecciones a través del uso de los materiales tradicionales y mas allá del uso de estos; actividades como Integración Multisensorial, exploración guiada,, uso creativo de materiales, reflexiones sobre experiencias sensoriales, entre otro; presentaremos estrategias de como presentar o introducir actividades para estimular al niño a desarrollar y reconocer el uso de sus sentidos a través de su entorno tanto en el aula como fuera de ella; cada objeto, cada lección, cada momento es una nueva oportunidad para ayudar al niño a desarrollar sus sentidos.

Todo esto con la idea de fomentar un aprendizaje holístico que prepara

Todo esto con la idea de fomentar un aprendizaje holístico que prepara a los niños para interactuar con su mundo de manera efectiva y así, con este enfoque, no solo apoyar el desarrollo cognitivo sino también emocional y social al permitirles comprender mejor sus propias percepciones y las de otros.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.



MARGARITA DIAZ

"Best Resources and Techniques for Promoting Language Development in a Multilingual Setting" Target Audience: All

Are you curious about raising bilingual children or creating a multilingual environment in your classroom or school? Join my session, where I'll tackle common questions and concerns surrounding multilingualism. As an expert in language acquisition and education, I will provide practical insights and strategies for navigating the complexities of multilingual upbringing. Discover answers to questions like: How can I introduce multiple languages to my child without causing confusion? What are the best resources and techniques for promoting language development in a multilingual Montessori setting? How can parents and Montessori educators support language learning and maintain fluency in multiple languages? What are the cognitive and socio-cultural benefits of being bilingual, and how can we leverage them for academic success and personal growth?

I will offer actionable advice and techniques for fostering linguistic diversity and proficiency. Whether you're a parent seeking to enrich your child's language skills or a Montessori educator striving to create an inclusive school environment, this session promises to provide invaluable guidance and inspiration. Join me for a session that celebrates linguistic diversity and opens doors to new opportunities for holistic learning and growth.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.



GEOFFREY BISHOP

"Where The Sidewalk Ends"
Target Audience: Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I,
Elementary II, Secondary I, Secondary II, Teacher Educators,
Administrators

This workshop will present strategies for reconnecting children to nature. We will focus on how all activities in a child's life will be enhanced and supported by experiences in nature and the outdoors. We'll explore activities and curriculum ideas that reengage students with the natural world through art, creative writing, science observation, and alternatives to traditional play concepts, all using available natural space, whether urban or suburban or rural environments. You'll leave with a revitalized understanding of the importance of nature in fostering students' ability to concentrate and be creative as well as their physical, social, and emotional well-being.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.



HEIDY LILCHIN SIMON, M.S MARIA GOYEN CASTILLO, M.S

"Handwork in the Elementary Classroom: Essential Element of Cosmic Education"

Target Audience: Elementary I-II



One of the key aims of Cosmic Education is to connect children to nature and give them an understanding of their environment. What if children could understand their surroundings by looking at their textiles? They would know that the clothes they wear, and all the textiles around them are made from the fibers of a plant or an animal that has been gathered or shorn, and spun on a thread that was then knit, and then cut and sew.

In this session we will discuss why handwork is an essential element of Cosmic Education. These points will be discussed:

- ·Handwork builds connection
- ·Handwork leads to gratitude
- ·Handwork brings inner peace
- ·Handwork builds resilience
- ·Handwork for Artistry
- ·Handwork for dexterity

Practical ways to implement handwork in your classroom will be shared. Come with a creative mind set!



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.



DR. NICOLE VITALI, PHD

"Unified for Wellness: The Power of Teacher-Parent Collaborations to Shape Healthy Futures for Children"
Target Audience: Infant/Toddle, Early Childhood, Elementary

In this workshop, we explore the critical role of parental involvement in promoting healthy eating habits among students. By fostering collaborations between schools and parents, we can create a supportive environment that positively impacts students' well-being. As schools are a prime location for children to be exposed to various foods outside of the home environment, it is essential for teachers to serve as healthy role models while simultaneously engaging parents in nutrition-related communications and school activities. This workshop will highlight practical strategies for engaging parents, share insights from current research, and emphasize the importance of teacher-parent communication in the context of nutrition.





MONICA GARGIULO-BENITEZ

"CULTIVEMOS LA PAZ EN LOS NIÑOS DE HOY, PARA PREPARAR LOS LÍDERES DE MAÑANA"

Target Audience: Early Childhood

Esta sesión proveé una gran variedad de lecciones y actividades para educar a los niños sobre la importancia de la paz. La presentación inspira al maestro a incluir actividades que fomenten el amor, el respeto, y la armonía; no sólo hoy, en el salón de clase, sino como una formación transformativa para el adulto de mañana.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 3:05 p.m. – 4:35 p.m.



HELEN DEVERE, M.A

"Nature Connections for Families" Target Audience: Early Childhood

Introduce children and their families to ideas and experiences that encourage them to become involved in nature. Demonstrate how nature helps develop the child's natural curiosity and desire to explore. It supports their physical, emotional, and cognitive development and guides the child to respect the environment and all creatures. "Only through freedom and environmental experience is it practically possible for human development to occur," Dr. Montessori wrote in The Absorbent Mind.

Dr. Montessori's ideas concerning the child and nature will be presented. Both outdoor activities and classroom follow-up will be covered with the lecture, discussions, and a power point presentation. Ideas for incorporating art and food preparation will be given. There will be samples of materials on display. Discussion and ideas from the participants will be welcomed. They will also have access to 100+ extra photos of projects and work in the classroom related to science discoveries. "When the child is an active participant, s/he sees connectedness among these areas and often finds a lifetime interest."



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 3:05 p.m. – 4:35 p.m.



DR. RAQUEL CONCEPTION, PHD, LMHC DR. ERICA CERRATO, MED, PHD

Meeting Students Where They Are - The Value of Psychoeducational Evaluations and School Accommodations Target Audience: All



Children bring to the table an array of cognitive abilities, language skills, academic knowledge, social-emotional skills, and more. The diversity in children's functioning is part of what makes teaching both exciting and challenging. Understanding a child's unique profile can greatly assist educators in meeting children where they are while also helping them grow. To this end, it is valuable for educators to be familiar with the nature of psychoeducational and developmental evaluations. Each evaluation allows professionals to deeply understand a child's current functioning across multiple domains, including intellectual, academic, memory, attention, language, interpersonal, behavioral, and emotional functioning. This understanding opens the door to effective accommodations and interventions to promote each child's well-being in educational and recreational settings.

Dr. Erica Cerrato and Dr. Raquel Concepcion of Pediatric Psychology Associates will discuss details about the evaluations they conduct. For instance, they will describe the reasons that families, physicians, and educators may refer for evaluations, what can be learned about each child in the process, and how information about each child's unique profile supports their independent, academic, social, emotional, and behavioral functioning. Psychoeducational evaluations are typically the most detailed assessment that a child will receive within healthcare and educational settings, and they allow parents and professionals to center each child to individualize their recommendations and care. Given Dr. Montessori's charge to "follow the child," Montessori educators can thoughtfully use information revealed from thorough evaluations to support each unique child.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 3:05 p.m. – 4:35 p.m.



LORNA COHEN MICHAEL PICONE MONIQUE LARGE

"Embracing and Trusting the Montessori Essentials in the Delicate Balance in Public and Charter Schools" Target Audience: Early Childhood, Elementary, Adolencent Administrators



This presentation will walk you through the Montessori strategies and essentials we have consistently practiced at our school. You will hear from our head of school, director of curriculum and Instruction and our Adolescent engagement coordinator. All information applies to students from 1st grade to 8th grade. This is how fully trusting in the Montessori method has allowed us to maintain our high performing school and state compliance. We will also share a correlation of the Montessori materials to the Florida Standards.





DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 3:05 p.m. – 4:35 p.m.



LORENA TASKER

"Mindful Classroom Leadership: Overcoming Fear to Lead with The Heart"
Target Audience: All

As passionate Montessorians, we all aim to walk Maria's Montessori's path. We strive to follow the child by applying her philosophy and working on achieving the best version of ourselves to serve as a connector between the child and the environment. However, sometimes there are hidden aspects of us that get on the way; not only challenging that connection but also the harmony in the school community.

Through this reflective presentation, we will uncover how fear, hidden deep within ourselves yet finding many forms of expression (fear of rejection, fear of not being good enough, fear of not having enough time, fear of change), affects our leadership. We will discuss how a mindful perception can help us identify it, find ways to transform it, and improve our emotional intelligence to serve as a role model. We will discuss the difference between managing and being a leader. Exploring the attributes of a servant leader by Maria Montessori, we will also learn about taking risks as we lead with courage. This presentation helps as a guide for self-awareness and discovery of inner tools for self-improvement.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 3:05 p.m. – 4:35 p.m.



JAVIER GONZALEZ, PHD JORDANAÉ LINENKOHL, M.S

"School Readiness Through the Lens of Montessori Education / Building a Foundation for Success: Montessori and School Readiness"

Target Audience: Early Childhood, Elementary



What is School Readiness? How is it different in a Montessori setting than in traditional schooling? How do experiences in a Montessori classroom prepare young children for future studies in elementary school? How do we ensure children are also developing practical skills that lead to successful lives beyond academics? We will also examine the whole-brain child, and how it engages the child's interest and natural curiosity to build intrinsic motivation to where they can work independently and cohesively with their peers both inside and outside of the classroom. Current research regarding how Montessori education has a significant and positive impact on academic and nonacademic outcomes will be presented. A real-world Montessori Pre-K and Kindergarten case study will also be explored.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 4:45 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.



GALINA MARKEVICH OLGA MARTIN DE EUGENIO

"Implementing the Montessori Method in a Traditional Public-School Classroom" Target Audience: All



This presentation will explore practical strategies for introducing key Montessori principles within a traditional public school setting. We will share actionable insights on adapting the Montessori method to enrich the existing curriculum, foster student independence, and support individualized learning, even within the structure of a conventional classroom.

Attendees will gain an understanding of how to integrate Montessori-inspired practices into public school classrooms, creating a blended approach that honors state curriculum requirements while embracing Montessori's emphasis on self-directed, hands-on learning.

Whether working with early childhood students or older children, participants will be equipped with ideas for building a more inclusive, student-centered learning environment. This presentation inspires educators to create classrooms that honor each student's journey, bridging the gap between Montessori ideals and traditional educational settings.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 4:45 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.



BARBARA MURPHY, PHD

"Who Moved the Pink Tower? Going Beyond Adaptation in Montessori."

Target Audience: All

In her 1946 London Lectures, Dr. Montessori asserted: "We can only help [humanity] if we aid the child to be better adapted to the future of civilization (...)Adaptation to the environment is a fundamental part of education." This emphasis on adaptation responds to Dr. Montessori's view that "One of the tasks of the child is to build himself adapted to the environment (...) Adaptation is the starting point, the ground we stand on."

Yet, what happens when that ground is constantly shifting, and the future remains uncertain? In today's dynamic world, change is the only constant. Against this backdrop, as the Japanese proverb goes: "The bamboo that bends is stronger than the oak that resists." Therefore, to better prepare children for life, we need to empower them not only to adapt to their current reality but also to embrace and navigate change itself. This entails developing adaptability—the ability to adjust to new conditions or circumstances, which involves being flexible, open-minded, and effective in identifying and responding to changes.

In this workshop, we will delve into the elements of Montessori education we can tap into to help children build adaptability—the essential skills and mindset needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. We will explore how regular and direct experiences in a reality-based environment enable children to stay engaged with and attuned to the surrounding world, enhancing their ability to perceive and anticipate change. We will further examine how the emphasis on hands-on activities encourages a proactive attitude, inspiring children to act, experiment, and learn from their experiences. Similarly, we will unpack how the principles of autoeducation and independence can instill a growth mindset—a belief in one's innate potential for growth, learning, and self-transformation, essential for adaptation. Finally, we will see how cultivating adaptability also nurtures resilience, empowering both children and adults to overcome challenges and promoting overall wellbeing, enabling us all to flourish in an ever-changing world.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 4:45 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.



DR. MONICA GILBERT, BCBA-D, LMHC

"Thinking Outside the Box: Transforming Defiance with Science" Target Audience: All

Are you experiencing challenges with behavior issues that lead to frustration, fatigue, and burnout? Are traditional interventions falling short in addressing the needs of all students? It's time to reevaluate and discover what might be lacking in your current approach.

In this session, we will explore the fundamental components of behavior problems in educational settings and uncover the crucial missing element. By deciphering the "ABCs" of your students' behaviors, you'll unlock a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons driving their actions. Additionally, we will delve into empirically validated interventions rooted in ABA principles that have been proven to yield tangible results.

By participating in this workshop, Montessori teachers will acquire valuable tools and insights to effectively address behavior issues in their classrooms, paving the way for a more supportive and successful learning environment for all students. Join us to transform your approach and enhance your ability to support and guide students in their social and emotional development. This workshop will include case scenarios, Videos, and an active Q and A.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 4:45 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.



MARIA EVA CHAFFIN

"Supporting Children with ADHD in the Montessori Environment: Practical Strategies for Success" Target Audience: ALL

This workshop will provide Montessori educators with a deeper understanding of ADHD and how it affects children in the classroom. We'll explore the signs and symptoms of ADHD and challenge common assumptions, offering a fresh perspective based on current research.

You'll learn how ADHD impacts children's learning, social skills, and behavior, and we'll dive into specific, practical strategies that empower students with ADHD to thrive in a Montessori setting. We'll highlight how the Montessori Method is well suited for students with ADHD.

The workshop will focus on using a Strength-Based Approach to shift the focus from a child's challenges to their unique talents and abilities. We'll also discuss how typical classroom strategies can be adapted for home, ensuring consistency between school and home life.

In addition to gaining actionable strategies for improving focus and supporting emotional regulation, you'll also learn techniques for helping children with ADHD develop better social skills. Cultivating a positive mindset, helping educators feel prepared and confident in guiding Neurodivergent students.

By the end of the workshop, you'll have practical tools and strategies that you can immediately implement to support children with ADHD, both in the classroom and beyond.



DAY 2

Saturday, January 25, 2025 4:45 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.



ENLACE EN ESPAÑOL RITA GALLIANO, M.A CCC-SLP

"La Terapia de Habla y Lenguaje" Target Audience: All

Hoy más que nunca, la función de los educadores en el desarrollo de la comunicación y el lenguaje en los niños es imprescindible y valioso. El habla, el lenguaje, y la comunicación son base para el éxito académico y para la interacción social del ser humano. A través de la comunicación comprendemos información, expresamos sentimientos y deseos, y creamos grupos sociales que nos brindan apoyo y felicidad. La terapia de habla y lenguaje es una de las terapias más comunes que vemos hoy en día porque se especializa en la comunicación.

En esta sesión los participantes obtendrán información valiosa sobre la incorporación de los principios de la terapia de habla y lenguaje. Hablaremos de como reconocer los signos de alerta en los primeros cinco años de vida de los niños. Explicaremos estrategias terapéuticas que los educadores de Montessori podrán utilizar para proveer al niño con una base sólida en lenguaje y comunicación. Por último, destacaremos la importancia de la colaboración entre los terapeutas y los maestros en la creación de entornos de aprendizaje adaptados a las necesidades de cada niño.



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