

Greetings from the Ladybug room,

I hope you had a great Thanksgiving. I surely did together with my family and friends. It's good to be thankful not only on Thanksgiving Day but every day.

I asked my students what they are grateful for and they answered: family, dogs, a new bow-tie, toys, for watching movies in their car, etc.

This month we had a classroom celebration for Nadine's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. It was a great opportunity to get to know Nadine better through the pictures and stories shared by her mom Amanda.

Recently we've got a new addition to our playground: a merry-go-cycle. Children continue to have a lot of fun with it.

It's so nice to see social cohesion in class; a younger child offering to help an older one or older children teaching younger students. One of my favorite examples was an older student demonstrating to a group of three younger students, all "eyes and ears", how to blow their nose.

I also love noticing students becoming inspired to work with new materials that others had lessons on.

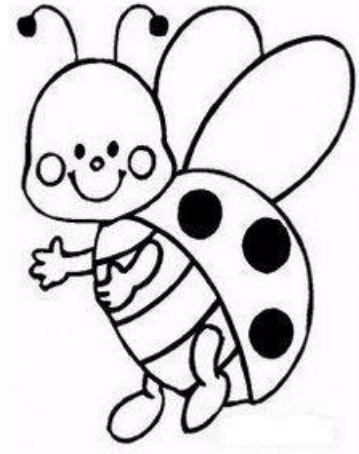
The kids are making great progress in class! They are implementing the rules of the classroom presented in our Grace and Courtesy lessons while also showing social, emotional, and academic growth. Besides participating in class activities--The Sound Game, The Line games, art projects, songs, and listening to stories--children have also been working with the following materials:

**Alivia:** Sandpaper Letters – tracing and learning new sounds and their corresponding shapes in preparation for writing and reading, The Connection Lesson with Sandpaper Letters to become aware of letter blending, Writing Folder- for practicing writing individual letters; The Geometry Cabinet – matching shapes and learning new vocabulary; Sorting Magnetic and Non-magnetic objects; Xylophone Toy – for learning music; Sewing – an activity that requires fine motor skills, good eye hand coordination and concentration.

**Amelia:** Zipper Frame- for refining fine motor skills; Sandpaper Letters- preparation for writing and reading; Sandpaper and Painted Globe, Puzzle Maps – preparation for geography; Solar System chart – tracing, pin pricking and writing down their names; The Decanomial Square; Geometric Solids and bases; Memory Games with shapes and cards of the Geometry Cabinet -preparation for geometry; Number Rods and Cards in order, Number Rods: Sums of 10 and less than ten – for counting and introduction to Addition.

**Camden:** Spooning activity – for refinement of fine motor skills, independence with daily tasks and developing focus and concentration necessary for academic work; Exploration with The Brown Stairs and The Pink Tower; Yoga postures; Tracing shapes of the Geometry Cabinet -preparation for geometry and refinement of visual sense; Sandpaper Letters – new sounds and corresponding shapes in preparation for writing and reading.

**Ethan:** Dressing frames: Zipper and Button frame, Pouring Beans and Water activities for developing focus and concentration, refining fine motor skills and independence with daily tasks; Sorting Buttons by



color, Color Tablets Box#2 -discrimination of color and development of visual sense; Geometry Cabinet – for discrimination of form, learning new vocabulary, and tracing shapes in preparation for geometry and writing.

**Forest:** Drawing with chalk, cutting paper, lay dough, Lacing, tracing shapes of Metal Insets – activities for developing fine motor skills, focus and concentration in preparation for academic work; Geometric Solids – for development of sense of touch, preparation for geometry, learning new vocabulary and indirect preparation for reading; Sound Boxes – for the development of auditory sense.

**Hazel:** Washing an Underlay, Washing Hands, Opening and Closing Containers, Zipper and Buckle Dressing Frames, Sewing, Tracing and pin pricking shapes, Metal Insets - activities for honing fine motor skills, focus and concentration; Sorting Level One – for refining of sense of touch; Puzzle Maps; Xylophone toy; she loves to work with the Sandpaper Letters in preparation for writing and reading.

**Ivy:** Locks Box; Tweezers activity; Matching Picture Cards; Stringing Large Beads; Washing a Chalkboard; Washing an Underlay; Hammering; Xylophone Toy; Yoga postures; she also loves to sharpen pencils.

**Jack:** Metal Insets, Cylinder Blocks, all four at one time – matching knob cylinders with their corresponding holes in direct preparation of hand for writing, and development of concentration; Water play activity; Bow Tying dressing frame – for independence in dressing himself, refining fine motor skills and focus; Yoga postures – for developing gross motor skills; The Trinomial Cube -for the development of visual sense and preparation for algebra; he also loves to trace shapes, pin prick, or cut, and paste.

**Jameson:** Opening and Closing Containers, Spooning, Pouring Beans, Folding Cloths, Eye Dropper, Sweeping using a broom, Hammering, Yoga Postures – activities for developing fine and gross motor skills, focus and concentration; Number Rods- practicing counting, Teens Boards: Beads and Cards and “Bring me” games - preparation for math; The Binomial Cube – for the development of visual sense and preparation for algebra; Color Tablets Box#3 – development of visual discrimination of color shades.

**Lillian:** Cutting paper (she loves it!), Stringing Small Beads, Opening and Closing Containers, Spooning, Grooming (Combing Hair) – activities for developing fine motor skills, concentration, and self-confidence; Xylophone Toy – for learning musical notes and songs; Cylinder Block #1- preparation of hand for holding a writing instrument, Pink Tower- developing visual sense, Color Tablets Box#1 and #2 – matching and learning the names of colors.

**Nadine:** Stringing Large Beads, Opening and Closing Containers, Cutting Paper, Eye Dropper, Dressing Frames: Snap, Zipper, and Button Frame, Spooning- these are activities from Practical Life area of classroom for developing fine motor skills, independence, focus, concentration, and for building self-confidence; Xylophone Toy, Color Tablets Box#2 – pairing primary and secondary color tablets; sorting things that Sink and Float; sorting Magnetic and Non-magnetic objects; Mystery Bag – to refine the stereognostic sense.

**Paige:** Sewing; pairing Smelling Jars; Thermic Tablets – a material for refinement of thermic sense; Teens Boards/ Games – deepens her knowledge of teen numbers by manipulating with golden beads and wood number cards; Brown Stairs, The Decanomial Square – for the development of visual sense; Sandpaper Phonograms – learns that two letters together make a different sound; Small Movable Alphabet – for building words; Xylophone Toy – for learning music; sorting Magnetic and Non-magnetic objects.

**Richy:** Matching dinosaur picture cards with their corresponding toy dinosaurs; Slicing Wooden Food, Play Dough- these are activities for developing concentration and fine motor skills; Brown Stairs, Red Rods – materials from Sensorial area of the classroom for developing visual sense; tracing Sandpaper Letters in print and cursive – preparation for writing and reading; Spindle Boxes – for counting and learning that quantity can be a bunch of things; Puzzle Maps of South America, Africa, North America, Oceania – for refining the visual recognition of countries and learning their names.

**Sarah:** The Decanomial Square; Color Tablets Box#3 – for grading shades of colors; tracing Sandpaper Letters in print and cursive, Movable Alphabet – for building words, Reading, Practicing Writing words in print and cursive.

For more detailed information about Montessori materials please visit

<http://www.infomontessori.com/index.htm>

Ms. Monica and Ms. Brandi.

(P.S. from Ms. Donna): Ms. Monica took a much needed vacation Nov. 10-18 so we invited someone I know, who has been a Montessori teacher for over 25 years, to take over her classroom for the week. Ms. Cindy Guschov brought a different energy to the room, and told me that she really enjoyed being with this group of children! She gave some more new lessons and got along quite well with the children as well as with Ms. Brandi.

## Ladybug musings . . .

Hello, my name is Cindy. I was the substitute guide in the Ladybug room recently in late November. My time with the Ladybugs may have been short, but it was very, very sweet. Monica left great notes and Brandi is a gem in her support of the children and the smooth transitions! Here are a few moments of our time together!

When we gathered at the end of the morning, the children were a captivated (or *perhaps* captive) audience listening to the little true stories I shared. FYI: One was about a skunk family that almost touched my barefoot toes. Another was about Smokey Bear (and we were learning the classic song, much to Richy's delight)! And the third true story was about 'what I did to get ready in the morning for school'. It is fascinating how even the simplest *true* story often holds their interest as they seek to understand the world around them, and discern 'is this true or not true? Great fun! We often sang together as well, a few familiar songs and began to learn a few others.

As Alivia was moving to Idaho that week, the children drew pictures to put together into a little book to give her as a 'good-bye and remember us' gift. We shared our drawing details with her when she came in to say goodbye.

Work in a Montessori room is often contagious! Children often watch with great interest, another child's work. That was true when I gave certain lessons, as well. For example, the first lessons of the geography work held such an interest for many.

Using the lovely Montessori materials (as small globes and wooden puzzle maps) we introduce the larger concept and work toward the details in a progression of lessons over time. The accompanying language of *land* and *water*, then *continent* and *ocean*, then the continent names, and later the countries in each continent is offered with each progressive lesson, after their spontaneous 'practice'. I have found the great fun for families is discovering they can often discuss a place in the world once the continents become familiar to their young child. "On the continent of Africa is where the elephants live." Or, "Penguins live in Antarctica where it is very cold!".

Just a taste of our days together, but each was truly a pleasure for me.