



Leonardo Da Vinci Academy

100 Allanhurst Drive, Toronto, Ontario M9A 4K4

## LDVA NEWS

### December 2017

EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOLING FOR THE FORMATIVE YEARS  
FOUNDED 1983  
WWW.LDVA.ON.CA

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### Signs of a "Normalized" Child - Summary

From "Tomorrow's Child" publication (Nov. 2016)  
by award winning Montessori teacher Maren Schmidt, M.Ed.

Children who are on-track with their development display most of the following 9 traits. In Montessori terms, this process of natural development is called, *normalization*.

**Love of Order:** Brain research shows that, during the first six years of life, the neural matter of the brain is growing at a tremendous rate. As certain sensory pathways are trod in the brain, future access is reinforced by the children's repetition of experiences, driven by love of order.

**Deep Concentration:** Children naturally come to an intense, self-generated ability to focus attention. It is how we are wired as human beings to learn. The modern world has many virtual/digital distractions that did not exist 50 years ago. A structured environment with clear expectations and minimal distractions helps develop concentration.

**Attachment to Reality:** This is one of several outward signs that healthy learning is occurring. Fantasy is often a call for more vocabulary and enriching experiences. To help the child reattach to reality, we need to feed the child's mind with real objects and real life experiences.

**Love of Silence & Working Alone:** Up until the time they lose their first tooth, the natural and normal development of children is characterized by a love of silence and working alone. The desire to be out in the community and working with others are characteristics of the elementary-aged child.

**The Transformation of the Possessive Instinct:** This occurs when a child is given an environment to use materials freely while respecting the right of others to do the same.

**The Power to Act from Real Choices:** Choosing out of curiosity helps create knowledge and experience which forms the basis for informed and real choice later in life.

**Listening & Following the Adults:** When the relationship is built on trust, children with on-track development listen to adults and follow their respectful requests. An obedient child listens for directions from a trusted adult and, based on previous experiences, chooses to follow with confidence.

**Independence:** The role of parents and teachers is to guide children to complete independence. A 3 year-old is able to do a multitude of tasks independently when given the tools and an environment to do so. Such tasks include: dress themselves, get themselves a drink, fix a simple snack, wash hands and face, and much more.

**Spontaneous Self-Discipline:** A key indicator of healthy and normal development in children is the presence of self-discipline. As a child's will is strengthened by the use of free choice, spontaneous self-discipline appears. This sets the stage for traits like concentration, coordination, love of order, and independence to develop naturally.

### LDVA CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The 2017 LDVA Christmas Concert will be held in the gym on Thursday, December 21 at 4:30 pm. Students from Preschool to Grade 6 will come together to delight parents and family members with performances in the spirit of Christmas. It is the perfect way to celebrate the coming Christmas Holidays.



### SONGS FOR SENIORS

On December 14th students in Grades 1-6 walked over to Scarlett Heights Retirement Residence at 2 pm to delight the seniors with their Christmas Songs.

### LEONARDO'S CHALLENGE

Ms. G. Ritacca



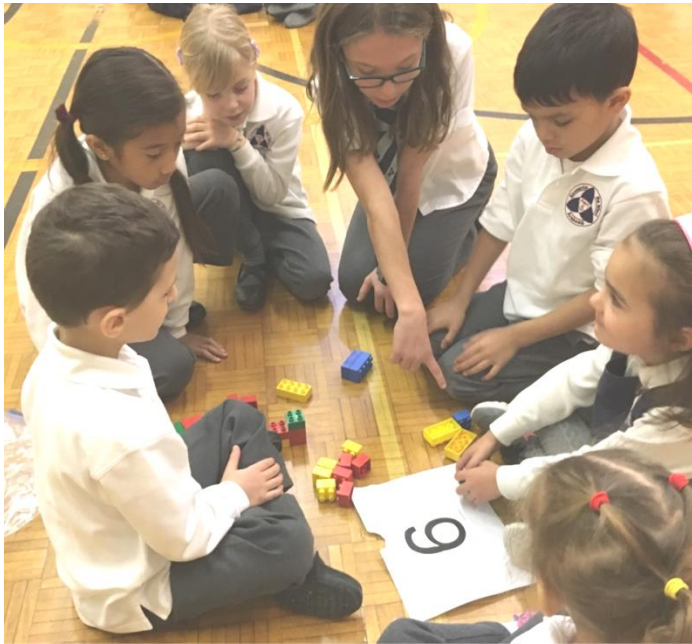
November's Leonardo's Challenge was hosted by Senior Casa. Students were divided into mixed-aged groups and given an identical bag of lego pieces. Each group was challenged to replicate two lego towers that were out of sight in the hall outside of the gym. The Casa and Scuola children were the "builders" in the group. They were the only students allowed to touch the lego pieces and were responsible for putting them together in order to build the towers. The older students were the "explainers." Every three minutes one "explainer" from each group was allowed to look at the towers for one minute. They would then return to their group and explain how to assemble the pieces. Most groups were able to successfully replicate one of the two towers. This challenge incorporated a variety of Da Vincian Principles which the students identified including *Sfumato* and *Dimostrazione*.



## LEONARDO'S CHALLENGE - PHOTOS



Above: Ms. Ritacca timing "explainers" as they study the towers



"Explainers" directing "Builders" to construct replicas of the towers

## COLD WEATHER GUIDELINES

With the arrival of the cold weather children are expected to come to school with warm winter clothing including jackets, hats, gloves, boots, and snow pants when needed. Conditions warranting indoor recess include: rain, thunderstorms, lightning, hail, extreme winds or cold. When temperature and/or wind chill factor indicates  $-27^{\circ}\text{C}$  or lower children will remain indoors. When temperature and/or wind chill factor indicates  $-20$  to  $-27^{\circ}\text{C}$ , recess may be shortened to 15 minutes depending on local conditions. Children will be monitored closely for signs of frostnip, frostbite or difficulty breathing.

## SNOW DAY POLICY

In the event that classes need to be cancelled due to a snow storm warning, when possible, the following procedure will be followed: the day before the storm warning parents will be informed that an email will be sent out by 6:30 am on the day of the closure. If in doubt parents are invited to call the school or send an email to Mrs. Lee at [sl@ldva.on.ca](mailto:sl@ldva.on.ca) before heading out to school.

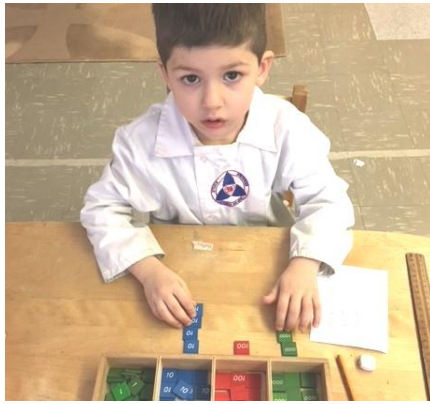
## CHRISTMAS SWEATER CHALLENGE

A Christmas tradition at LDVA is to challenge each student to make their own Christmas sweater (parents' help optional) and wear them to school. Below are pictures of some of this year's creations.





## SCUOLA MATERNA NEWS Signora M. Ricciuti



*Dopo aver completato la programmazione per il mese di novembre, i bambini della Scuola Materna, si accingono alla preparazione del periodo natalizio, completando tutte le attività che questo*

*mese comporta, incluso il Concerto di Natale. In occasione di questo evento i bambini creano un'atmosfera natalizia attraverso l'apprendimento di canzoncine e poesie tradizionali, questo arricchisce sia la lingua che la cultura italiana.*

*Il 19 dicembre abbiamo avuto "Christmas Sweater Challenge" dove si doveva usare la propria creatività per realizzare una maglia natalizia.*

*Il 20 dicembre, è stata una giornata speciale, "Pancake Breakfast". I bambini sono venuti a scuola con un comodo pigiama, che li ha tenuti caldi mentre hanno mangiato "pancakes" la mattina e pizza a pranzo.*

*Giovedì il 21 di dicembre è la data dell' **Concerto di Natale** alle ore **16:30** ( 4:30 p.m.). Tutti i bambini dovranno indossare il loro grembiule per il concerto. Questo sarà l'ultimo giorno di scuola per il 2017, le lezioni riprenderanno lunedì l' **8 di gennaio, 2018**.*

*Venerdì il 22 di dicembre, gli insegnanti avranno un aggiornamento professionale e quindi non ci sarà scuola.*

## CASA MONTESSORI NEWS Ms. E. Grimaldi



As Christmas is approaching the children in Junior and Senior Casa have been very busy practicing their songs for the Christmas Concert that will take place on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December at 4:30 pm in our gym. We would like to remind all the parents and grandparents that the doors will open at 4 pm. Half-day children are also asked to return by 4 pm.

The children have been enjoying the snowy weather. We remind all parents to please ensure that children come to school in full winter gear – snow pants, hats, mittens and scarves – especially the little ones who are outside for an hour before we start our program inside. Children, who are enrolled in extended care, do not have to wear their snow pants, since they have some time to play inside before school starts.

This month in Junior Casa we have been talking and learning about winter and the changes in nature that the cold weather brings. We have also been reading Christmas themed books daily. Thanks to parents who send books for our circle times. The children are proudly sharing the books they bring from home. This month we also decorated our Christmas tree in the classroom, made some beautiful ornaments and baked Christmas cookies.

Since children tend to get sick easier in the winter, we kindly ask the parents to review our school's Health Policy in the Parents' Manual. Parents asked to please not send their children to school if they are sick and can infect other children. It is very important to keep them home when necessary.

Have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New year!



Junior Casa children at recess enjoying the arrival of snow







**Above & Left:** Children in Senior Casa exemplifying "normalized" behaviour.



**Wishes to all our families  
for a joyful and safe  
Christmas Holiday**



**The Christmas art featured above are works by Grade 4 students  
Bianca, Amanda and Avaya**

**We look forward to seeing everyone back in school  
in the new year on January 8, 2018**

## **ENABLING DEPENDENCY IS NOT "GOOD PARENTING" - S. Ritacca**

Teaching children to be self-sufficient and not to be dependent on mom or dad for everything they want or need is one of the most difficult but essential roles of a good parent. Maria Montessori understood that "emerging adulthood" is something that must be nurtured early in life by parents and teachers. Gina Lofquist, director of teacher education at the American Montessori Society agrees that parents who do everything for their children from birth to when they leave home are not only preventing them from developing a sense of independence necessary for a successful adult life but are fostering a low self-esteem. Although all parents want their children to be happy and to spare them from the discomforts of life, parents who continuously rescue their children from safe everyday challenges are denying them valuable opportunities for real growth. Young children should be encouraged to take care of their personal hygiene, dress themselves, feed themselves, or carry their nap-sacks as soon as possible (rather than wait until these can be perfectly executed). Most educators and parenting experts agree that trusting children to be self-reliant early on will help them grow into independent and confident adults.

The real world does not reward enabled dependency and independence cannot be accomplished if the child has a fostered sense of entitlement. Family psychologist John Rosemond believes that making a child the most important person in the family "is the first step toward raising a child who feels entitled". Kids who see themselves as the centre of the universe or as the most important person in the family eventually will be brutally challenged by a world that does not acknowledge their entitlement. The more toys a child is given the less each toy is valued by the child and the more they feel entitled. Catering to a child's selfish wishes only feeds their greed and does nothing for their self-esteem. As an example, making Christmas less about receiving and more about giving and being thankful helps nurture a healthier sense of responsibility and self-worth.

Just as the most essential person in a corporation is the CEO, Rosemond maintains that to prepare children for adulthood they must respect parents as the head of the family. Sadly, as Rosemond points out, "Moms and dads of this brave new millennium ... are treating their children as if parents exist because of kids when it is, in fact, the other way around. Their kids exist because of them...". Until they are old enough to support themselves or have their own families, children need to be raised to respect the well meaning authority of their parents and teachers. Parents who do not understand this concept are setting their children up for great disappointment and are failing to prepare them for adulthood. Good parenting is not about catering to a child's wants and desires or otherwise enabling dependency. **It is a balancing act that is more about saying 'no' when appropriate, allowing children to experience the consequences of their own actions or choices, fostering independence, and nurturing autonomy and self-esteem.**