

**MONTESSORI
FLORIDA COALITION
2024**



**Montessori
Florida Coalition**

**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,
JANUARY 26 - 27**

Miami, Florida

MONTESSORI FLORIDA COALITION 2024



SEEING THE CHILD WITH OUR HEARTS

The same miraculous force that brings new life to the world, is the same force that drives the construction of the human being. We have the privilege of guiding each new Child along this path; a path that is newly formed for this pure being. Each child is born with a potential for greatness, and our job as Montessori educators is to help the child develop that potential. Seeing the Child with our hearts speaks to the love we should have for every Child in our care and to help support the gifts that unique Child brings to the world. We want to support every Child to embrace this great mystery called life with awe, and to allow the force of love to light the path. As Dr. Montessori said, "Of all things, love is the most potent."

MONTESSORI FLORIDA COALITION 2024



DAY 1

Friday, January 26, 2024
5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER DR. MONICA GILBERT, BCBA-D, LMHC, LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST IN FLORIDA

"Outside the box- Exploring Behavior Problems and Strengthening Teacher-Parent Partnerships"

With over 15 years of experience, Dr. Gilbert is the proud owner of two thriving private practices: Crystal Minds New Beginning and Crystal Minds Psychological Services. Specializing in providing compassionate care for individuals with ADHD, anxiety disorders, and autism across all age groups, Dr. Gilbert humbly brings her extensive expertise to the table. Recognizing the need for change and improvement, Dr. Gilbert incorporated Motivational Interviewing into her ABA practice seven years ago. Witnessing the incredible impact, it had on increasing parental involvement and reducing therapist burnout. Dr. Gilbert has delivered webinars and "bootcamps" on Motivational Interviewing through "The.MI.Doctor" platform. She has also been invited to share her expertise at prestigious conferences such as HABA, LABA, CalABA, NHABA, UTABA, and has been a trusted workshop facilitator for ABAI for five consecutive years. Dr. Gilbert is also the author of the book, "How to STOP Talking and START Communicating." This invaluable resource provides a framework for using MI techniques in ABA parent coaching sessions, revolutionizing the way therapists and families connect.

Are behavior problems in your classroom causing frustration, fatigue, and burnout for teachers? Are you finding that interventions that have worked in the past are not effective for every child? It's time to ask yourself, what's missing? During this session I will delve into the world of behavior problems in classrooms and uncover the missing piece of the puzzle. By identifying the "ABCs" of your students' behaviors, you will gain valuable insight into the "WHY" behind their actions. We will also explore empirically validated interventions that can make a real difference.

But it doesn't stop there. Building a strong partnership between teachers and parents is crucial, especially in a Montessori school setting. We will discuss strategies grounded in Motivational Interviewing that will provide teachers with valuable tools for effectively communicating with parents. Discover how to obtain "buy-in" from parents while maintaining a positive rapport.

MONTESSORI FLORIDA COALITION 2024



DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
9:00 a.m. - 10:25 a.m.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER PAULA LILLARD PRESCHLACK

"Montessori Practices Reflect True Principles: Let's Strive for the Potential!"

Paula is a writer and speaker on the benefits of the Montessori's educational approach and the author of *The Montessori Potential: How to Foster Independence, Respect and Joy in Every Child* (2023, Chicago Review Press). She holds a MEd from Loyola University and AMI diplomas at the Assistants to Infancy, Primary and Elementary Levels, and she audited the NAMTA Orientation to Adolescent training. Paula taught a Primary classroom for 4 years and a Lower El class for 8 years at Forest Bluff Montessori School. She was the Assistant Head for 4 years before becoming the Head of FBS for another 15 years. Paula is the proud parent of two Montessori graduates, now in college.

With colorful slides showing children of all ages working in high fidelity classrooms, Paula will guide the audience to reflect on why, where and how our practices reflect the principles of the Montessori approach. By using Montessori's core principles as our true north, what steps can we take to make our way towards higher fidelity in all of our classrooms, no matter what our training, background or experience?

When we apply Montessori's principles authentically, what outcomes will we see in our students in the classrooms and beyond? Paula will show the traits that emerge and describe how they manifest, with photographs to support her remarks.

Paula will conclude by taking this message one step further; proposing three simple, attainable steps that we can take as individuals to come together and help one another to reach our collective potential as a larger Montessori community. Only then will we be able to let the world know that there is this better approach of education, and that Montessori has much to offer ALL children—with every time, place and culture accounted for!

This message of inspiration and hope is designed to kick off a conference that addresses all aspects of Montessori and all audience members.

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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.



LINSEY DEMICCO

Nurturing Creativity in the Primary Environment
Target Audience: Early Childhood

In my presentation I offer ideas and solutions for all teachers to feel confident in their ability to present art and have fun with their students in the process. I cover basic ideas of things already in the classroom then expand to creative writing, cooking, drama and costume design. Art is often seen as a few activities on a shelf but it truly can be incorporated into every subject. Every child loves to create.



ELIZABETH WILLIS, PHD

"Leading with Vulnerability: How Teachers and Administrators Can Create Epic Change with Integrity, Authenticity and Vulnerability"
Target Audience: All

The field of Education looms under an archaic system of checks and balances based upon a power under and power over structure. The byproduct of this system ensures competition, gaslighting, inauthenticity, codependency and survival of the fittest. Anyone inside the school system can see this dynamic play out between lead and assistant teachers, teachers and administration and between administrators. This model is not only mentally and physically exhausting for teachers and administrators, students become a byproduct of this leadership. Maria Montessori's Method, based on education the whole child, spiritually, physically, emotionally and intellectually, advocated for an authentic leadership. In our New Paradigm of Teaching... how can we shift to true leadership in schools? How can we pierce through our own anxiety to speak the truth with compassion? How can administrators lead with responsibility, and clarity providing authentic support for their teachers so teachers feel safe to be authentic? These questions and more will be answered in this not to miss engaging talk with Dr. Elizabeth Willis.

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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.



CRISTINA VALENTE

"The Child, Community & Family"
Target Audience: Infant/Toddler

Come and learn ways to make your Infant/Toddler community stronger by enhancing the triangle of the child, community, and family. When we have a child in our class, we also have their family and the outer community. We will look at ways of strengthening the classroom community from the start of the year. Ideas will be shared on how to do home visits and how to write progress reports and conduct parent conferences. Suggestions for toilet learning with the family and ways to deal with difficult parents will be explored as well. We will also look at resources and ideas on how to bring equality and inclusion into your infant/toddler community.



BEATRIZ MARTINEZ-PEÑALVER

"I am Triumphant"
Target Audience: All

In today's world, the mental health crisis has become a pressing concern, affecting both educators and students. Montessori teachers are dedicated to fostering holistic development, and enhancing their resilience and well-being is essential to effectively nurturing the next generation.

In this workshop you will learn:

1. Reinforce Resiliency: We will explore the concept of resiliency and discuss practical strategies
2. Happiness Toolkit: Happiness is a skill that can be learned!
3. Addressing the Mental Health Crisis: We will discuss the role of Montessori teachers in decreasing the progression of the current mental health crisis and the importance of creating a supportive environment for students.

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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.



ENLACE EN ESPAÑOL

SANDRA VALERA

"¿De Donde Soy?"

Target Audience: All

Agenda

¿De Donde Soy?

¿Cómo puede la educación Montessori crear un mundo más inclusivo y equitativo?

¿Cuáles son las razones de promover la diversidad y la inclusión en la educación?

¿Cuál es la importancia de derribar barreras entre razas y culturas en la educación?

¿Cómo podemos mejorar la conciencia y sensibilidad hacia la diversidad y la inclusión en la educación?

Preguntas y Respuestas

Palabras de Clausura

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DAY 2

*Saturday, January 27, 2024
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.*



CHRISTINA LLADO

"Heal from burnout and reconnect to your love for education"

Target Audience: Administrators

Christina delves into the pervasive challenge of burnout, a phenomenon not limited to teachers alone but extending to administrators and staff. She will share a holistic approach which empowers administrators an opportunity to create an environment aligned optimal decompression for both administrators and staff alike. By fostering an atmosphere of mutual support and collaboration, Christina outlines strategies for the school family to uplift one another. Drawing from her own journey with burnout that in part led her to sell her Montessori schools, it is her mission to empower other school owners not to do the same so that students around the world can benefit from their talents. She will provide practical tools through breathwork, tapping, sound bowl healing and meditation which will take administrators on a journey to reconnect to their hearts in hopes to ensure a brighter, sustainable future for the world of education by collectively combating burnout.

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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.



KAREN RICCARDI

"Teamwork Makes the Dream Work" Best Practices When Working With Parents

Target Audience: ALL

The relationships educators have with a child's family is a critical component of providing a true Montessori education. Yet teachers can often find this partnership to be challenging, especially when a child struggles with the typical routines and expectations of the classroom for his/her age group. If you want to learn about tried and true ways to have the best connections with your students' families, join this workshop to build your confidence and effectiveness in teaming up with them. We will cover productive Back to School Night formats, valuable progress report writing, running beneficial Parent/Teacher conferences, and supportive day to day connections with families!



NICOLE VITALI

"Navigating Cultural Diversity to Promote Healthy Nutrition Behaviors in the Classroom"

Target Audience: Infant/Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary

This presentation will discuss the role of teachers in the development of children's nutrition habits and impact of culture on nutrition along with the importance of recognizing cultural differences to create healthy and culturally sensitive classroom environments. In this presentation, we will also cover highlights of nutrition statistics on US children and teachers as well as current nutrition research related to Montessori education.

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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.



BARBARA MURPHY, PHD

"Montessori Education as a Pathway to Well-Being"

Target Audience: All

Well-being is a universal human aspiration. And in today's fast-paced and demanding world, ever more a necessity. Cultivating well-being is crucial for facing life's challenges with grace and strength. Why? Wellness practices offer a powerful toolset that can empower us to recharge our physical, mental, and emotional batteries while building resilience to bounce back from adversity. By incorporating these practices into the learning experience, we can enhance our students' overall well-being and help them cultivate the skills needed to better navigate life.

At the same time, as Montessorians, our practice is grounded in Montessori principles. This actually provides an opportunity to incorporate well-being. How? Going back to the essence of Montessori pedagogy, education is about preparing the whole child for life. This perspective naturally aligns with the idea of wellness. By mindfully exploring this and other connections between Montessori and wellness, we can more seamlessly infuse well-being-related concepts and activities into our classrooms and beyond.

In this workshop, we will take a fresh look at key elements of Montessori theory, as seen through the lens of wellness. We will explore concepts like independence, movement, nature, and community to gain a deeper understanding of the synergies present between various wellness dimensions and different aspects of Montessori education. In this way, we will see how the mindful promotion of well-being proves integral to a truly holistic and authentic Montessori learning experience; and essential to help children better navigate life, today and in the future.

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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.



ENLACE EN ESPAÑOL

ARTURO DE LA MORA

"Montessori en un ambiente multicultural como South Florida"
Target Audience: All

Cual es la realidad de la educación en general en la Florida? Entendiendo a la población floridiana, las raíces de la diversidad cultural y religiosa. Los conflictos que se generan a partir de las diferencias ideológicas. La propuesta de Maria Montessori. Guiando a las nuevas generaciones hacia un futuro más pacífico y próspero. La gran diferencia entre guiar y enseñar. El respeto como fundamento básico. El reto: Cual sería la metodología. Aprovechando las fiestas y celebraciones anuales culturales y religiosas. Como incorporarlas a nuestro método Montessori? El currículo Montessori Multicultural para Primi Passi and Casa dei Bambini. Ejemplos de los materiales que empleamos. Ejemplos de Lecciones que usamos. Mesas de trabajo. Conclusiones.

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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
3:05 p.m. - 4:35 p.m.



HELEN DEVERE, MA

"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."

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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
3:05 p.m. - 4:35 p.m.



MR. J (FRANK JURADO)

"Mr. J's Circle Time Jams: Building Community and Connection Through Melodies & Motion"

Target Audience: Infant/Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary

Unlock the potential of music and movement in the Montessori classroom with Mr. J's interactive and transformative workshop. In this dynamic session, teachers will embark on an experiential learning journey filled with joy, creativity, and the harmonious power of music.

This workshop isn't just about learning; it's about having fun while gaining practical skills and insights that can be immediately applied in the classroom. Teachers will leave the session inspired and equipped to create a more vibrant and enriching Montessori environment through the power of music.



RHINA ETIENNE

"The Power of Play in a Montessori Class"

Target Audience: Infant/Toddler, Early Childhood

Active playtime is decreasing with the increased screen time children are absorbing each day. Parents are losing sight of how valuable active play can be for their child's development. Play allows countless opportunities to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. Maria Montessori observed children's engagement and considered them as active members of their learning, hence the popular quote "Play is the work of the child." The Montessori environment nurtures children's desire to play and learn. As Montessorians, we hold the opportunity to cultivate our students' potential by allowing them to explore in the Prepared Environment.

In this workshop, teachers and parents will be inspired to be advocates of play. Members will discover how active play is similar to the experiences in the Montessori classroom. They will gain insight in how play connects to learning in the Montessori classroom. As well as, discover practical ways to promote order,

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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
3:05 p.m. - 4:35 p.m.



MURIELLE LEFEBVRE

"How to become trilingual with the OML method?"

Target Audience: Early Childhood, Elementary

The OML method is based on the Montessori pedagogy material coupled with the educational tools of the Orton Gillingham American speech therapy method. A combo that allows teachers to properly guide the child in their learning of a language. Everything is addressed (phonetics, spelling, vocabulary, reading comprehension) for all children, including the 30% usually left on the side of the class to understand reading, so that all can succeed. Join Murielle in this dynamic presentation explaining how she combined these two methods and provide tools on how to apply it in your classroom environment.

ENLACE EN ESPAÑOL

NILDA TORRES AND CLEMENCIA ROSADO

"Divertiendonos con las extensiones del material sensorial"

Target Audience: Infant and Toddler

This presentation will aim at the Infant and Toddler Community with ideas on teaching these young Montessorians Practical Life Food Preparation. The participants will learn to set up the activity. What do they need to prepare food? Benefits of food preparation activity: The activities make the food more delicious to the child as they have contributed to how the meal is made. Help toddlers who are picky with food. It helps develop fine motor skills. Teaches the value of food and hygiene that goes with its preparation.



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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
4:45 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.



JAVIER GONZALEZ, PHD

"Maria Montessori Meets the Monster in the Closet: AI (Artificial Intelligence)"

Target Audience: All

The unprecedented speed of advancements in generative artificial intelligence (AI), is rapidly transforming formal and informal educational settings and systems. Educators and learners are grappling with unanticipated and rapidly changing AI that impacts both day-to-day K-12 classroom practices and the use of AI in informal (out of school) settings. In response to these technological changes, the nature of learning, teaching, and assessment is rapidly evolving. Schools are faced with insufficient research-based findings on the use of AI tools and environments for teaching; other educational organizations are equally challenged. As such, this in-depth presentation will clarify which AI concepts and principles K-12 students should be learning and examine the ways AI will both promote and impact equitable education and inclusive learning. A demonstration on the application of ChatGPT for educators and learners will be presented. Resource materials will also be shared with attendees.



LAURA BALOGH

"Unlocking the Significance of Non-Verbal Communication in Education: Empowering Montessori Educators through Body Language Interpretation"

Target Audience: All

In Montessori schools, grasping non-verbal cues and decoding body language is crucial. It enables teachers to connect with students, parents and peers, adapt teaching methods, and nurture a supportive environment for personal and academic growth. Materials: Power Point presentation, videos and examples will be used to illustrate the concept.

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DAY 2

Saturday, January 27, 2024
4:45 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.



MARIA EVA CHAFFIN

"Montessori Teacher' Secret to Inclusion Success"

Target Audience: ALL

We, as teachers AND Montessorians need to understand the power of relationships! Relationships represent the foundation of everything in life, especially when we work with kids. Our preconceptions can often prevent us from seeing the real child that is hidden from normal view! Some children will be more challenging than others, but every child WILL be different. If we are going to tackle this challenge, we need to prepare with some real introspection and reflection on what we must do. We must come prepared because we must not forget that we are the adults in these relationships, we are the ones with the tools and strategies to make this happen.



ENLACE EN ESPAÑOL

MONICA BENITEZ

"Explorando Ciencia en el ambiente Montessori"

Target Audience: Early Childhood

Esta presentación provee un extenso currículo de lecciones en las áreas de Botánica, Zoología, Ciencia Física y Experimentos de Química para niños de 3 a 6 años, y básicos de 6 a 9 años.

This presentation will provide great ideas to present science lessons that includes Botany, Zoology, Physical Science, and Chemistry for the 3 to 6 level, as well as 6 to 9 level.



ENLACE EN ESPAÑOL

BARBARA MURPHY

"Relaciones que impulsan la alegría y el bienestar en Montessori"
Target Audience: All

La Dra. Montessori argumentó que "una prueba de la corrección del procedimiento educativo es la felicidad del niño". ¿Qué impulsa la felicidad? Según el estudio más largo del mundo sobre el tema, realizado desde la década de 1930 por investigadores de Harvard, las relaciones positivas aportan a las personas la mayor alegría y contribuyen en mayor medida a su bienestar general.

Como parte de la experiencia de aprendizaje, diferentes tipos de relaciones surgen a medida que el niño interactúa no solo con otras personas, sino también con el entorno e incluso en su introspección personal. ¿Cómo afecta cada una de estas relaciones al bienestar? Si las relaciones significativas y positivas son la clave de la felicidad, como sugieren las investigaciones, ¿qué lazos debemos fomentar mientras buscamos promover la alegría y el bienestar en el aula? Y, ¿cómo podemos hacerlo de una manera que esté alineada con la pedagogía Montessori?

Siguiendo la tríada de aprendizaje Montessori, exploraremos el impacto de las relaciones en el bienestar a lo largo de tres dimensiones: social, ambiental e intrapersonal. En cada caso, analizaremos, desde una perspectiva relacional, diferentes elementos de la pedagogía Montessori, como comunidad, movimiento e independencia. Finalmente, veremos cómo el fomento de relaciones positivas como parte de la experiencia de aprendizaje en Montessori puede contribuir a potenciar la felicidad y el bienestar.

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