

Adventures at AIMS...coming together as a community

Joy in the Montessori Classroom

A normalized, peacefully working Montessori classroom does not preclude the need for joy and imagination in children. As educators, we sometimes work too hard at attaining a quiet, busy, and engaged classroom while ignoring the natural spontaneity and wonder of life. Adults worry about losing control and their classrooms running amok. Through letting go of our control, the children can find it in themselves. We actually need to “step back for a moment to consider the perspective of the child – to consider allowing joy, enthusiasm, and imagination to be spontaneously expressed, while maintaining the peace of the classroom” (Ulrich, 2014, p.44).

A normalized classroom at all times is a myth. There are definitely incredible moments where you look around the classroom and see every child working silently, independently and productively and you think to yourself “they don’t need me”. These are the moments to be treasured and appreciated because simply put, life happens. And when life happens, or unpredictable moments occur, they help us to appreciate and experience the joy in everyday life.

The joy of living and learning is present in so many moments in our classrooms. One spring morning last year during an observation, I sat in awe watching the productive hum of the children. This normalized glimpse was disrupted by a single butterfly breaking out of its chrysalis. A three-year boy saw it and exclaimed aloud, “Look guys, the butterfly are hatching!” In one split moment normalization became chaos. Twenty wide-eyed children ran to surround the shelf and see the miracle occur for themselves. Both teachers looked on, at first somewhat horrified or fearful of the commotion, but then relaxed as they witnessed the incredible smile and joy on each student’s face.