

VOICES OF AMI TRAINING

The Most Powerful Education Comes from Connection

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“Action has meaning only in relationship; without understanding relationship, action on any level will only breed conflict. Understanding the relationship is infinitely more important than the search for any plan of action.”

J. Krishnamurti

The most meaningful learning doesn't arise from imposition or memorization, but from trust, empathy, and emotional connection between the teacher and the learner. When a solid bond exists, human vitality is activated, the individual feels validated, and the teaching-learning process becomes a safe experience that stimulates true development. The home, the classroom, or any learning space should be an environment where students dare to be themselves, to explore, to make mistakes, and to grow, knowing they have a guide and a supportive environment.

The bond must be the cornerstone of human flourishing. Education must become an act of resistance against a culture that accelerates, exposes, and demands too soon. If, as parents, we want our children to retain their childhood, we must elevate education to an act of rebellion.

“The real danger threatening humanity is the emptiness in men's souls; all the rest is merely a consequence of this emptiness.”

Maria Montessori, Education and Peace

Children possess an innate inclination towards figures of authority, connection, and warmth—essential elements for their development. The absence of these role models in their environment generates a state of disorientation, experienced as an unbearable existential void. It is no longer enough to be physically together; it is necessary to be truly present. In this context, replacing human interaction with screens is not only insufficient but also exacerbates the problem, overshadowing the holistic development of children. The screen shines, and childhood fades.

Dr. Gordon Neufeld says that the secret of parenting lies not in what a parent does, but in who they are to the child. In a list of ten points, I will attempt to provide some guidelines for homeschooling, so that it strengthens both the bond and the child's development.

The Ten Commandments of Living Together at Home

1. ORDER. There is a place for everything and every activity. This refers to the organization and structure established in the environment and daily activities to promote independence, responsibility, and concentration in children. It includes designated spaces, routines and schedules, sequence of activities, preparation, and cleanup. An activity has a sequence and is not finished until everything is back in its place and tidy.

2. MINIMALISM. Let's keep what works, what is most appropriate and useful for the child's age. The most important thing is to have a few things that can be used a lot. When the environment is cluttered, creativity doesn't flow; therefore, we must create a simple learning environment, prioritizing quality over quantity.

3. SILENCE. Children need spaces with few stimuli; they need silence as part of their spiritual growth. Create spaces and moments where auditory and visual stimuli are minimized so that children can focus inward and develop their awareness and spirituality.

4. FREEDOM. Give children the opportunity to create, experiment, make decisions, and act autonomously. Modeling and supporting them is key.

5. CLEAR BOUNDARIES. Establish a framework with clear, consistent, and fair boundaries. Provide clarity on what can and cannot be done at home. These boundaries should have natural or logical consequences. This helps children understand that their actions have consequences and take responsibility for their decisions.

6. ACTIVITIES TOGETHER. Each day includes time to be together and time for individual activities. Fostering connection through meaningful experiences, which then lead to periods of independence, is a key element in family life.

7. AREAS OF INTEREST. Identify what the other person is passionate about. Everyone likes different things, so it's important to dedicate time to each individual. Use individual interests as a point of connection.

8. RESPECT. Recognize and value children's will. Respect whether or not a child wants to start an activity. Establish that if they choose to start, they must finish. Respect the child's wishes, but without forgetting the boundaries.

9. RECREATION. We have the capacity to see things from a different perspective and to find joy and creativity in daily activities. To see things with fresh eyes, with an open and curious mind, as if it were the first time seeing them.

10. LIVE IN THE PRESENT. Value this great gift that childhood brings us and take advantage of every opportunity to create bonds and strengthen the first community: the family.

“Among the many attempts to guide society toward reconstruction, we still lack one that directly addresses the human soul.”

Maria Montessori, El nuevo niño y la paz (2023)

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Eder Cuevas Iturralde is Executive Director of Montessori México (AMI affiliated society) and Director of the Montessori School of Chihuahua, with more than 20 years of Montessori experience. He is also currently a member of the AMI board of directors. AMI trainer for the AMI Montessori School Leadership course, Montessori Sports consultant and international advisor on Montessori education. Eder received AMI workshop training in Bergamo, Italy and AMI-NAMTA Orientation in Ohio, USA. He worked from 2014 to 2020 at AMI-NAMTA Teen Orientations.