Firsthand Experiences

Very young children learn about their immediate environment by exploration, investigation and discovery through firsthand experiences of nature, of their village, town or city, of the culture of their family and by living within a community. These experiences lay the foundation for later, more formal learning of biology, geography, history and about the natural and man-made environments found on our planet.

These firsthand experiences are fundamental to their understanding of the world in which they live. The sensorial impressions they receive through real experiences contribute to later concept formation and support all aspects of the child’s development. For example, consider the richness of sensory experiences when a child finds a shell on the beach:

- The pleasure of finding the shell in the first instance, the feel of the shell:
  - its ringed, knobby, or smooth surface
  - its shape
  - its weight
  - its wetness or dryness, depending on where it was found
  - its color, luster or glitter
  - its smell
  - its sound if it is a large shell
  - its taste - if you are a toddler you may have licked or tried to bite it; if you are an older child, you may know that the shell you have found belongs to a mussel or a crab which you may have tasted.

Now think about how these unique experiences enhance the child’s whole development, physically, cognitively, socially, emotionally and linguistically. Consider the child’s experiences in the context of their lives in their family and the community of adults and peers with whom they share these experiences.

Would the child gain the same richness if he/she sees an image of a shell on a TV screen, computer monitor or in a book? Would they really understand what a shell is without their encounter with the real shell found on the seashore?

The child’s innate drive for exploration and independence is the key motivator to learning through firsthand experience. The environment and the adults and peers in it are an integral part of these learning opportunities, which can be found in all manner of places and settings.

Maria Montessori believed if we want children to know and understand our planet, we must begin by giving them opportunities to learn through real life materials, experiences and environments. Each year the Primary Team collaborates to carefully plan both in-house and off campus trips for the children to enrich their educational experience here at the Center. This includes our school wide celebrations, festivities, performances and gatherings. Such a wealth of learning experiences and the memories created are priceless. We have a lovely community here at Center Montessori School. Next up, our annual in-house celebration with Grandparents and Special Friends!
We would like to thank Bradley’s family for offering healthy snacks and flowers to the classroom this week.

We would like to thank Sawyer’s mom for borrowing books from the library for our classroom.

Thank you to Dina’s family for donating a male beta fish, he is very happy in his new environment and the children are taking good care of him. We will soon vote to name him!
Thank you to Skyler for the delicious community snack and the lovely tulips! And big thank you to Stephanie (Skyler’s mom) for coming into the classroom to help create the poster for the Fall Art festival this weekend. Hope to see everyone there!
Thank you to Leach family for providing community snack and fresh flowers for our classroom.

Aurora is using a turtle puzzle and matching the words

Lola is using cards and counters lesson to practice her math skills

Christos is tracing a Giraffe for his zoology project

Isabella is using the pointer to find new words to read in the Words In Color charts