

Dear Montessori families,

The year 2018 was a year of milestones for the team here at MAPSS (Montessori Alternative Public School Society)

- Our AGM was held on Oct 4 2018. All current board members were approved for re-instatement in their current positions for the coming year and the MAPSS financial report was presented and approved
- Our annual PEACE night was held at Lake Bonavista School on Oct 11 2018. Feedback from parents and staff was overwhelmingly positive
- In 2018 MAPSS gave \$15,000 to each of our 3 Montessori schools to replenish and add to Montessori materials

*Did you know that PEACE stands for Parent Education And Conversation Event?*

## MAPSS Movie Event Nov 10 2018

We had over 400 people attend our free Movie event on Nov 10 2018, presenting "Dr. Seuss' The Grinch"

**Watch for details of our next movie event scheduled for Spring 2019**



In the New Year MAPSS will be working on our strategic plan for the next 5 years. We plan to send out a survey to find out what your priorities are going forward.

**We want to hear your thoughts, view and ideas!**

As we move forward it is important for us, as a society, to take on the views and comments of our Montessori community to help us build and grow

*Did you know that almost 1000 students are enrolled in the CBE Montessori Alternative Program in Calgary and our enrollment numbers in kindergarten and grade 1 are growing?*

## MAPSS Casino Fundraiser Apr 3-4 2019



**Please save the date for our 2019 casino fundraiser**

Come out for a shift with family and friends (volunteers do not need to be members of MAPSS) and have a GREAT time while helping MAPSS secure the funds needed to continue to support our Montessori schools.

# Reduce family stress during the holiday season

## Montessori-style

Excerpts from the Montessori Notebook found at [www.themontessorinotebook.com](http://www.themontessorinotebook.com)

### Limit the social calendar

This is especially important if you have an introverted child who may need to decompress from the socializing – social occasions are often enjoyed by introverted children, but does cost them energy. It can even be an idea to scope out a quiet spot if you have guests or are visiting others, where a sensitive child can sneak away to when they need a bit of quiet time away from the action.

#### Things you can do

- Plan some days off in December for pyjama days

These days will act as a buffer for everyone to decompress from the excitement and prevent holiday fun burn-out.

- Say “no” to invitations

I like to say “It’s important to me...” to explain why I am declining an invitation, including to not spread myself too thin, to not have too many commitments, or to be present for my family. Think creatively and perhaps take turns with your partner to attend events, or have a day where people can drop by your place to exchange festive greetings so you can keep the rest of the month simpler.

### Be clear on your boundaries

Holiday stress is often caused by people crossing our boundaries. It’s usually not even done on purpose, and we may not even aware we had a boundary to be crossed.

#### Things you can do

- practice self-awareness and communication.

If something is too much for you, it is ok to say: “It’s not okay for you to talk to me that way/ask that of me”.

We are being a powerful model for our children about setting boundaries with others in a kind and clear way.

### Gift giving and receiving

Even being a conscious consumer, I still find that the amount of toys and “stuff” accumulates quickly in our homes with young children.

In the holidays, you may receive some unwanted gifts. This used to drive me crazy. What helped me relax and enjoy the gift giving and receiving, was to remember that these gifts are well-meant. No-one is trying to buy a gift to upset you. They have purchased a gift they think your child will enjoy. So I always thank someone for their gift, modelling gratitude for the children, knowing they will absorb this example.

And I think we also need to remind ourselves that not all of us have the luxury of gifts during the festive season. Which is an apt reminder that Montessori is more about the way we live with children than about the gifts and material objects.



## Translate for others and ourselves

Communicating clearly during the holiday season can be difficult. There can be different rules at different places you are visiting. There can be different ideas about parenting. And you may have some family who do not understand the Montessori approach – some family members may make you feel like you aren't helicoptering your child enough, and another may feel like you listen too much to your child.

### Things you can do

- Be a translator for others or ourselves; "It sounds like..." is a useful phrase in these situations.

For example:

"It sounds like Grandma is finding the noise in here too much, and you all want to play a chasing game. Can you find a way to do it without being too noisy for Grandma?"

"It sounds like Uncle Steve doesn't want you to jump on the sofa and you really want to bounce. I wonder what you'll come up with."

"It sounds like you really want to play with your cousin's new toy and they want to play with it all by themselves. Let me know how you solve the problem."

Also be available to help a child with words if they are having a hard time. "Did you want to tell them you'd like some quiet time by yourself?"

By translating for our children, others or ourselves, we will be able to help each other hear what the other is trying to say, without threats, the children hitting each other, or too many explosions.

## Create fun traditions

You may already have created some family rituals. Rituals are a large part of human history. They have to do with your culture, your time and place in history. It can be an idea to create some traditions with the extended family too.

We enjoy the tradition of adding a new Christmas decoration to the tree each year. It's becoming an eclectic collection with lots of fun memories where we found each one. Rather than seeing holidays as a time for stress, create fun traditions you will enjoy instead.

## Look after ourselves

Dr Montessori did always talk about the preparation of the adult and I am sure the holidays are no exception. We need to be calm so we can support our sometimes over-excited and over-tired children.

So this holiday season I'm going to be sure to be well-rested, put on some classic festive tunes on Spotify, turn on the festive lights, grab a blanket, and enjoy lots of warm tea and homemade cookies. And if weather permits take long walks in nature.

**Wishing you & your families all the best for the holiday season**

