

The Montessori Teacher's Mindset

“We have been given a gift in the children we serve. How grateful we are. We are able to share in the lives of these children, to observe, and to participate in the unwinding expression of their individuality. All areas of the classroom are important, but none of them is as important as the love we offer and receive in these children.”

Who is *'the child'* that Maria Montessori talks about so frequently? *Each* child is *'the child.'* The one who misbehaves is *'the child.'* The one who pushes on the playground. The one who just can't seem to get to the toilet on time. The one who wiggles incessantly at nap time. The one who makes our hearts smile with the gift of a ragged dandelion. The one who thanks us for small kindnesses is *'the child.'* It is impossible not to be loving. It is impossible not to be grateful.

Each child is *'the child.'* Each child is filled with the unknowable, unpredictable greatness of potential. If we are able to recognize each child as *'the child,'* perhaps we may serve the child more fully. Seeing each child as worthy of immeasurable respect raises the stakes...it forces us to focus on the things we can't control. In doing so, it forces us to take responsibility for unpredictable outcomes.

It is necessary then to give the child the possibility of developing according to the laws of his nature, so that he can become strong, and having become strong, can do even more than we dared hope for him. —Maria Montessori