



Snowy day from our window



Adding with the stamp game



The Map of South America



Everything can be labeled in Violeta, according to color, shape, proper name, etc. in Spanish of course!

Looking Ahead

Feb 16, Fri. No School. AMI Conference.
Feb 19, Mon. No School Presidents' Day
Feb 20, Tue. No School. AMI Conference
Feb 28, Wed. 6pm. Wildflower Network Parent Evening

2/11 Snack, laundry, flowers: **Nelson**

"Just as in using a compass, the fixing of a point is what enables us to draw the circle, so in the child's formation the fixing of his attention is basic to all that comes afterwards. No one says it must always fixate in the same way, or on the same things, but unless it does fixate formation cannot begin. Without concentration, it is the objects about him which possess the child. He feels the call of each, and goes from one to another. But once his attention has been focused, he becomes his own master and can exert control over his world."

M.Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, p.217



Writing my cursive letters.

Concentration is an important event in Violeta. We nurture it, we support it, we respect it. Because it is through concentration that the child can find his own being, and acquires the discipline and the perseverance to listen to his own self, his own nature. When a child concentrates we say he is following his natural path of development or, in Montessori's words, he is normalized. This, Montessori says, "is not the point of arrival, ... but it is the point of departure, after which "freedom of action" consolidates and develops the personality". The type of concentration that we pursue is an **active concentration** that "engages the child's whole personality", his physical skills, his emotions (internal motivation) and his mind. This is very different from the attention demanded by a screen, which is passive and externally imposed (we could say demanded) by an overflow of stimuli. Active concentration requires internal motivation and the hand to be guided, with purpose, by the mind.

How can we foster this type of concentration at home? Activities of practical life support active concentration: cooking, cleaning, caring for plants and pets, making beds, folding laundry and putting it away, matching socks, cleaning shoes, dusting. Show your child how to do these activities and have them available so that she can do them independently.

Have all necessary utensils together in one place where your child can find them, for example leave broom, brush and pan, sponge, bucket, in one place; leave socks to sort in accessible basket and in the same place, etc. Have different activities/games/blocks in order and accessible, not too many, you can rotate them as your child's interests change. Have a low table with paper/writing/drawing/art materials accessible and in order. Have books (not too many, 8-10 is enough) on a shelf, rotate them. Order and routines are fundamental for your child to build an understanding of the world around and make choices that will develop her understanding. Set moments in the day that your child knows she has time to choose and play at her own pace without being disturbed. Limits are good for concentration. Appropriate choices: too many choice or a crowded room makes it more difficult for your child to choose something and feel good about her choice. Proper use of materials: if your child is allowed to make a mess, misuse/break objects, paint the walls, it will get your attention (external motivation) but will not help concentration (internally motivated). If your child is concentrated painting the wall (the hand carefully guided by the mind), you may wait until it is complete and then calmly explain that walls are not for painting and if she wants to paint something big there is a special paper for this. This will not hinder her creativity and will support order, self-direction and confidence. Spend unstructured time in nature (no manmade play structures), observing, exploring, breathing. Let your child be her own guide, choose independently and do things for herself, don't become a full time entertainer/organizer, it is good for your child to wander around and "be bored", let her find her own internal motivation. Essentially, what you will do is prepare the environment (physical, emotional and intellectual) to satisfy your child's developmental needs, for this you need to observe, put yourself in your child's place, see the world through her eyes, what makes sense? what doesn't? And then allow your child freedom and time.



Learning the teens, quantity and symbol



Making shapes on the geo board



Making a collage