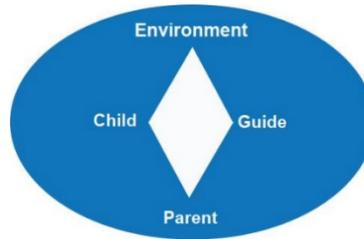


Strategic Montessori Parenting



Transforming Parents into Partners

A Membership Program to Help You Succeed

Before we entered Montessori we were used to the traditional educational line.

Teacher ----- Student

When we entered the Montessori world, we were introduced to the Montessori triangle.

Child – guide – environment

This triangle changes everything.

Now, we want to introduce the Montessori Diamond.

Child --guide -- environment -- parent

If the Montessori triangle is able to produce results one hundred or two hundred times better than the “line”, what kind of results can you expect if we double, triple, quadruple that one hundred, or two hundred percent by introducing the diamond?

Our Montessori experience has not included the diamond. Few of us in Montessori were given the training to even think about parents. We focused on the materials and the philosophy. The reality and the needs of parents was not presented.

In Montessori education we are given the luxury of thinking about the child and not just the education. The ultimate success of a Montessori experience is the transformation of the child and the character qualities that emerge from the child. Dr. Montessori said that all that power of transformation, of creating the adult, already resided in the child and we by observation and judicious aid help that emerge.

Montessori provides an ideal environment for optimum growth in all dimensions of the child’s life. Now, helping to create this environment when the child goes home is an extension of meeting the child’s needs. The home environment impacts how the child comes back to school the next day. With basic encouragement, knowledge and training parents can cooperate with and enhance what transpires every day in the prepared environment.

Does it take effort? Yes. Can it be accomplished? Yes. Is it worth it? Yes. Strategic Montessori Parenting offers a blueprint for successful parent “normalization” and education. Even the slightest parent accomplishments give dividends way beyond the investment.

There are eight stages of Strategic Montessori Parenting:

1. Education
2. Basic Involvement
3. Becoming Part of the Family
4. Creating Commitment and Loyalty
5. Being there for them
6. DISC Personality Assessment
7. Tracking Involvement
8. Additional Notes and Topics

The direct aim of Strategic Montessori Parenting is to help parents better understand and cooperate with the amazing educational/life opportunity in front of them. The indirect aim is that parents become an integral part of their child’s school and develop attachment and loyalty to the school which results in increased participation, donations, enrollments, and marketing.

What Montessori parenting changes:

1. Parenting changes parents
2. Parenting changes students
3. Parenting changes the classroom
4. Parenting changes guides
5. Parenting changes school spirit
6. Parenting changes the perception and the reputation of the school
7. Parenting changes enrollment

The membership program of Strategic Parenting starts with a four-week course that will take you through each stage on the way to normalized and committed parents.

Resources for Strategic Montessori Parenting include:

A parenting album that covers and explains each of the strategic stages of Montessori parenting.

A subscription to the 50 newsletters of the Parent Education Newsletter series. Newsletters (a page or a page and a half) are written in parent language and explain the operations and the philosophy of the Montessori classroom.

A subscription to the five-part video presentation of “Getting Your Money’s Worth”, featuring the lifetime benefits of a Montessori education.

A subscription to 45 one-minute audios for daily parent communication and education.

A hard copy of “Getting your Money’s Worth” along with its workbook that explains the lifetime benefit of an investment in Montessori

A copy of “Common Sense Parenting A to Z”, a mini encyclopedia of 161 practical parenting topics from accountability to zeal written from a Montessori perspective.

A sample copy of the DISC personality assessment.

Your membership investment in Strategic Montessori Parenting membership is \$1998 but as a founding member of this Strategic Montessori parenting community it is being offered for a limited time for \$997 along with a founding members monthly fee of \$25 which gives you continued publishing access to all the copyrighted subscriptions and access to the on-going community forum that will provide help with implementation and sharing successes and new insights.

“When you are invited to the wedding of former toddlers, you must have done something right.”

Strategic Montessori Parenting

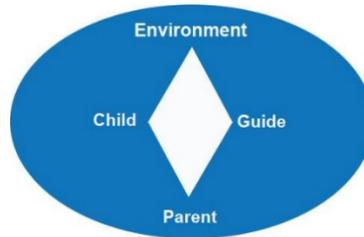


Table of Contents

Eight stages

1. Education
2. Basic involvement
3. ¹Becoming part of the family
4. Creating commitment and loyalty
5. Being there for them
6. DISC Personality Assessment
7. Tracking Involvement
8. Additional Notes and Topics

Education

page 7

1. Enrollment
2. In Box
3. Parent newsletters
4. Parenting audios
5. Parent conferences
6. Montessori parent classes
7. Your Media - Web site etc.

Basic involvement

page 11

1. Schedule involvement
 2. "New Year's" party
 3. Christmas/holiday program
 4. Children's open house
 5. End of year program
 6. Montessori classes
-

Becoming part of the family

page 15

1. "Help Days"
2. Special projects
3. Picnics
4. Parties
5. Grandparent's Day
6. Field days
7. Field trips
8. Fall Festival
9. "Community" fund raisers

Creating commitment and loyalty

page 21

1. Texting
2. Pictures
3. Child's "inventory"
4. Parent conferences
5. Parenting classes
6. Headmaster/headmistress dinners

Being there for them

page 24

1. The nature of the child
2. Dynamics of the family
3. Nurturing the family

DISC personality assessment

page 27

1. Use with parents
2. Another tool to enhance observation
3. Use with the child
4. Use with family
5. Use with staff
6. Strengths of DISC

Tracking involvement

page 29

1. Donations
2. Volunteer time
3. "Parent" report cards
4. Influence

Bits and Pieces of Parenting Wisdom

page 32

1. Parent advisory boards
2. Constituencies
3. General information letters dealing with problems
4. Making school expectations clear
5. Fee structure
6. Parent Information
7. Transition meetings
8. Volunteer calls
9. Toxic parents
10. The impact of “parenting” on enrollment
11. Feeding and care of parents
12. Most parenting indirect aim

Addenda

page 36

1. Parent Registration Survey
2. Partnering Commitment
3. Partnering Activities for the Year
4. Re-enrollment Conference Survey
5. Marketing Survey
6. Parent Skills Survey
7. Child’s Inventory
8. DISC Personality Assessment

Strategic Montessori Parenting



Stage #1

Education

First law of parenting:

“You will NEVER get them all to show up.”

Second law of parenting:

“Just because they all don’t show up, it is still worth it.”

In our parenting program we attempted to meet the four objections (excuses) that parents use.

1. I need to feed my child.
2. I don’t have a babysitter.
3. I can’t get there in time.
4. I have to get my child to bed early

Are there any we are missing?

1. We provided dinner – for free.
2. We provided babysitting – for free.
3. School closed at six. Dinner was served from 5:30 to 6:30.
4. The parenting meeting started at 6:30 and lasted one hour.

Is there a percentage of parents that attended that you would like to guess?

Let’s just say that it was never 100%.

Third law of parenting:

I pay you. You are the expert. Why do I need to know this stuff?

Fourth law of parenting:

I am a good parent without knowing all of this.

Fifth and sixth laws are similar. (You can fill them in.)

So, given the parenting challenge how do you start educating parents?

Guilt doesn't work.

Duty doesn't work.

Appealing indirectly to self-interest. (It is almost vanity.) "You will help your child to succeed even more if you are able to cooperate intelligently with what transpires in the classroom. We offer help to gain that advantage."

The parenting education challenge starts in the admissions process. How you conduct your interviews. What you are selling. How you are going to deliver results. And, importantly, what you are going to deliver. Your script for your parent interview must include words and thoughts such as, "We are a parent involved school. We work with you on the nurturing and educating of your child. You are your child's first and most important teacher and we help you succeed." Even though these words are spoken (and parents have no idea what they really mean) you are setting the groundwork for them to become "Montessori parents" who will succeed amazingly at their task with your help, encouragement, and training. Your challenge in Montessori parenting is that for you to succeed beyond expectation your parents have to succeed beyond expectation – and they are not expecting anything from themselves – after all, they are paying you to deliver this fantastic education. Their Montessori parental success is an indirect aim of your whole school program. And as we have been trained indirect aims carry as much weight and significance as direct aims – and sometimes even more.

So, in the interview process there has to be a good paragraph about parent education. It also needs to be in your application, your handbook and on your website. Montessori parent training is not really an extra or an afterthought. It is an essential component of a successful Montessori program. There needs to be a spoken expectation of parent participation and a school attitude that parents are vital partners in the Montessori experience. Along the way we need to share with parents that Montessori is not education like they received, and neither is the parenting that supports this education.

Parenting starts at enrollment.

"Getting Your Money's Worth, Your Investment in Montessori" is a small 38 page booklet that shares, in parent language, the lifetime benefits of a Montessori education. It is both a marketing tool and an educational tool for parents. Many schools include the booklet in their registration packet. Starting with the title "Getting Your Money's Worth," you are answering the question the husband will ask the wife in relationship to the cost of a Montessori education. And starting from the beginning you are framing the discussion in terms of investment. This is the same investment framework we address in parent education. Traditionally, mothers take the lead role in schools. "Getting Your Money's Worth" is a major step in bringing in Fathers for both education and support. At 38 pages the book is certainly "dad-sized" for quick reading.

Parenting starts in the in-box.

Email, Facebook, Instagram no matter how you communicate we have you covered. Our parent education **newsletters** are written for busy parents, written in language they understand (not even our Montessori educationalese) giving them insights, helping them see what they have not consciously observed and moving them into active Montessori parenting. Most newsletters are a page or a page and a half. There are 50 newsletters in the subscription with more being added every year. An index of topics makes it possible to customize your delivery. The original delivery schedule was once a month for three years but now there are sufficient newsletters to have a weekly distribution. It has been asked that if we deliver all of the newsletters this year what we would use in the following year? You start over again. Won't the parents have already read them? We hope so. However, their three-year-old is now four and the parent is ready for "new" information on how to serve their child. It is not the "same" information because it now applies to a "different" child.

The program also provides 45 one-minute **audios** on various parenting topics (from a Montessori viewpoint) to give your parents educational and parenting support.

Parenting starts (surprisingly) at parent teacher conferences

Parents come to a conference to learn about the progress of their child. A prepared teacher, while sharing about the child and progress, will also be prepared to educate the parent not only about what has transpired but prepare them for the next steps in their child's progress. While you have their undivided attention it is a great time to share with them about the process that they are involved with knowingly or unknowingly. Every teacher needs a hard copy of the Parent Education Newsletters in their classroom. It is especially effective when questions arise during a conference if you can produce a written document that addresses their concern. (If it is written it must be true.) The parent education newsletters are effective in giving teachers a vocabulary to address parent concerns in a language the parents understand. There is also a spiral curriculum for parent education, and it needs to be visited often. Another resource for parent teacher conferences is "Common Sense Parenting A to Z" which details 161 topics – everything from accountability to zeal. Often during parent teacher conferences parents will seek the help and guidance of teachers to address parenting concerns. "A to Z" addresses those concerns from a Montessori perspective. It is another resource for vocabulary and insight for teachers.

Montessori parenting also continues (not-surprisingly) at Montessori parenting classes

A formal program of Montessori instruction indicates to parents the significance the school places on this education. The challenge is to get them there. Strategic Montessori Parenting provides the beginning framework for parent education. Five thirty-minute videos correlating to "Getting Your Money's Worth" will provide the basis for discussion of the Montessori philosophy.

As part of Strategic Montessori Parenting, we are providing twenty audios of actual parenting classes to use in your school. They can serve as outlines for your own presentations, an idea bank to spring from or to use in other creative ways in your school. These sample classes use Montessori philosophy as applied to everyday parenting. Topics will include family, marriage, toys, discipline, character, self-esteem, and

love. The more that your parents hear from you about applying Montessori philosophy to their everyday life the more they begin to flow into the life of the school.

Your parenting class topics need to vary to maintain interest. If your school has more than one level of Montessori education topics need to address all age levels. An intriguing or stimulating title for your parenting presentation helps spark attendance.

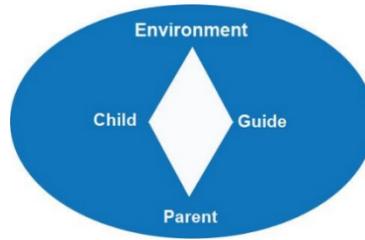
Your media

Your communication avenues also need to include education. If your website is used for parent communications, it needs to include education related notes. If you use a school Facebook page, it is a perfect place to continue parent education. However, parents are not looking for pages and pages of teaching. The art of quotes and short paragraphs help stimulate parent thinking toward their children. If you send a weekly or monthly school information newsletter look to include the short educational quotes. When you come across articles that merit special attention (after all, they caught your attention) send a link along with two or three lines of why you found it interesting. Remember, not everyone will open it but for those that do, it will have great benefit.

Conclusion (Or maybe the beginning)

Education happens all the time. Sometimes it is labeled education often it is just conversation. Take advantage of every interaction with parents to help them along. Remember, they may only have one child while you may have twenty (this year) and over ten years you've had hundreds. They can benefit from your experience and though it is not formally labeled "parent education" your words have real benefit.

Strategic Montessori Parenting



Stage #2

Basic Involvement

Parent education and involvement requires a systematic, scheduled approach. Busy parents need advanced information to be able to program their own calendars. (Remember, that even when it is programmed it is hard to achieve.) All changes in “required” parent involvement need to be announced in late winter before reenrollment. This is a courtesy to our parents. The word “required” is not a warm fuzzy but then neither is getting up at two A.M. with a sick baby. Strategic parenting requires requirements. You and your staff make a tremendous commitment to your school children and their families, and your families need to reciprocate. Remember who is the primary beneficiary of parent involvement – the children (and mom and dad.)

Basic school year schedule

We planned for parents to be at school one night per month.

September	New Year’s Party (Starting off the “New” School year)
October	Parenting class
November	Parenting class
December	Christmas/holiday program
January	Children’s open house
February	Parenting class
March	Parenting class
April	Parenting class
May	End of year program

Almost half of the schedule is “entertainment” and not instruction. “A teaspoon of honey ...” (Thank you Mary Poppins.) Montessori Strategic Parenting is not just about education but about developing relationships – that just happen to revolve around the school. The more time parents spend at the school, making friends, enjoying themselves, the greater the likelihood that the Montessori education will rub off on them. They will get it from other parents. They will get it from teachers. They will get it from the environment. And they will get it from their children.

For many parents the reality of their own school experience was not one of enjoyment and discovery. They now have an opportunity, vicariously, to enter into a world they never knew. Myriads of reasons that parents come to a Montessori school. They might want to give their child opportunities to succeed academically, (after all that is one of things that we are noted for.) They might want their child to “enjoy” school. Some parents may understand the character enhancing value of a Montessori experience. Others are giving their child opportunities they never had or enjoyed.

Strategic Parenting helps parents to understand the Montessori principles and how the parent can apply them to their own home, life and the nurturing of their child. The byproduct of this understanding (the indirect aim) is that your classrooms and school benefit from this understanding. Few parents will come to this understanding of Montessori principles on their own. They need a guide and that is the purpose of parent education. Your own experience of Montessori training required time and attention to the mental changes needed for transformation. Unfortunately, our parents, in their busy lives, have little of either and that is why we create a space in their schedule for a focused look at the heart of Montessori – its principles.

The August/September New Year’s Party

What better way to introduce your families to Montessori parenting than with a party? (That little bit of honey.) You set a tone from the beginning that their parent education/school experience (being present is a good beginning) can be enjoyable. The agenda for the party (most of the time in life there is an agenda) is to share the excitement of the New School year and all of the things that they get to be a part of.

Agenda items

Introduction of new staff

Once your school grows beyond one classroom it is extremely important that your parents know your other staff. Your choice of staff conveys a lot to your parents about the character, quality and expertise of your school. Details about your new staff – experience, education, accomplishments even hobbies convey your school’s commitment to hiring excellence. As much as you are educating parents you are always marketing. If you have an elementary program your preschool parents need to know (and like) the elementary teacher as they make decisions whether to stay with you or move on.

Acknowledging continuing staff

Continuity of staff says a lot about your school as well. The New Year’s party is a great time to acknowledge and honor your staff. The same information about them should be conveyed to your parents as there are always new parents who are not familiar with the staff.

The calendar with all of the exciting things planned

Your calendar needs to be published in all its various forms – on your website, email, Instagram and paper. Paper is still good - for the refrigerator. So, make it colorful and beautiful. Handing out a calendar at the party gives you the opportunity to highlight the fun of the coming year. This section of Strategic Parenting only covers the basics, but your calendar presentation needs to cover every exciting special event you've planned for the year. The three that are listed in our basic involvement include first a Christmas/holiday program. Christmas is an exciting time of year for our children. And the warm feelings (and laughs) that come from children's performances add to parent's warm feelings about the school. The second is a children's open house where they demonstrate to their parents the lessons that they have learned. This is an opportunity for the academic achievements of the children to shine – and by reflection the school. Third, an end of year program is an opportunity for community celebration. Your school is a community and for many parents it is the most significant community they belong to.

The new initiatives that have been achieved or to be achieved this year

Take the opportunity, again, to thank last year's parents for their work and contributions to "The project" (whatever you accomplished last year to enhance the school.) And announce what your initiative for school enhancement is this year. You never know if among your new parents are resources (besides money) to accomplish your next goal. They may have contacts or even expertise that they can contribute.

Introduction of new parents by classroom

The "first Day of School" is always somewhat traumatic (even for adults.) Introducing the new parents by classroom gives your old parents a heads up on whom they need to welcome specifically. The friendlier you help your parents be, the friendlier is the whole school. Getting new parents comfortable quickly with the culture of the school is a major part of Strategic Parenting.

Christmas/holiday program

Don't get caught up in the controversy made by a minority to deprive children of the magical experiences of Christmas. You don't have to be religious to celebrate Christmas. "Good will among men" is certainly something to agree on. And it might be a good time for unhappy people to practice a little tolerance for the prevailing spirit of the season. Sing a few carols as well as Frosty the snowman, have cookies and punch and create memories for your children. A Christmas pageant or play always brings laughter and smiles as the unscripted moments always appear. Laughter is a great way to go into the Christmas season. Again, warm feelings created about the school are part of the re-enrollment matrix.

Children's open house

This is a highlight for the children to demonstrate what they have learned and a great time for their parents to see what their tuition dollars are affording for their child. This more than even parent conferences solidifies a parent's feelings of dollars well-spent.

The bright eyes and happy smiles of children demonstrating their success carries great weight in the decisions on re-enrollment. Serve carrot sticks if you don't want to serve cookies and punch. (Just kidding!)

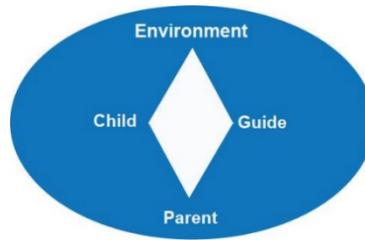
End of year program

This is the culmination of a year's worth of work. It is time to celebrate. Celebrate with music, a play, a musical. Celebrate with an art show as part of your end of year program.

Parenting classes

Parenting classes are about more than education. They are a bonding experience for parents with people who love their children. Parents learn about how their children's teachers operate and gain a new esteem for the skills and dedication showered on their children.

Strategic Montessori Parenting



Stage #3

Becoming part of the family

Family, in the best sense of the word, is where you are welcomed and loved. It is where you invest your time and efforts. And eventually, it creates a sense of responsibility of wanting to take care of the family. There are a number of activities that can happen in a school that will foster this sense of family and belonging.

Help Day

It is exactly what it sounds like. It is a day to help at school. We scheduled a help day for the first Saturday of each month from nine to noon. On our help days we would tackle projects in the classroom we could not get to when the children were present or for which we needed more help than the staff could accomplish quickly. Our help day list included a variety of projects:

Clean sleeping mats

Paint playground equipment

Paint the classroom

Move playground equipment.

Replenish the sand in the sandbox (Six yards is a lot of shovelfuls)

Make materials

Plant flowers

You might ask shouldn't the maintenance dept. do these projects? If you are a small school the maintenance chief often shares a desk with the head of school. And even if you have maintenance this gives a boost to accomplishing tasks and gives a sense of satisfaction to the people who participate. One help day there were three or four fathers trimming our "mini-orchard" five pear trees in front of the

school. When asked how they were doing they said great because we work in offices all of the time. This is fun.

The direct aim of help days is to get the work done. The indirect aim is that parents get to invest a little of themselves into the classroom and into the school. They get a leisurely look at the classroom and campus (not their usual hurried weekday drop off and go.) They get to know the teachers. They get to connect with other parents. Their investment of time and labor transformed the classroom into their classroom and their school.

The mechanics of a help day

Parents are required to come to one help day in the fall, one in the spring and one if they are there during the summer. We did need to ask the teachers to come to two a semester because someone needed to direct the parents in their projects.

The help day roster was assigned. Otherwise, you have two parents one month and twenty the next. There was no problem in changing months if it didn't work with their schedule.

A parent conversation long ago. "What happens if a parent doesn't come to help day?" "Mmm." "Well, there should be a fee because the rest of us show up." "What would you suggest?" "Well, at least fifteen dollars." (You can imagine how long ago that conversation was.) With the years, the fee increased. A good fee today might be \$150. It is never about collecting the money. It is about getting the involvement. (We'd still collect the money.)

Always assign two parents to each task. Working together becomes a social time, a friendship time an enjoyable time.

If you paint, always change colors otherwise hardly anybody notices all the good work and the refreshing of the environment.

Special projects

There are projects that can't be finished in a morning or will have a longer completion schedule but will have a great impact on the school. We had set up a committee to explore our options in setting up our computer lab which the committee was going to do. I remember the long discussion on whether we should install 4 megs or 8 megs of memory in our new machines. (Does that tell you how long ago it was?) But the group of parents were excited about contributing their knowledge and skills to help the school.

One special project was the installation of a concrete tricycle track on our playground. One of our parents had the expertise to ramrod it but obviously would need help. So, we assembled a group of dads, eight or ten to help. Like all things in life, it never goes exactly as planned. The concrete truck showed up, but the forms were not finished, and a number of dads had to leave. What are you going to do with a truck full of concrete if you have no one to spread it? (So, we got on the phone explained the situation and soon had another six dads to show up on a Saturday afternoon. Why did they come? First, they had a relationship with the school and secondly and just as important they were asked to help.

Here is a parent involvement law. When you send out a general note asking for help, most people will assume that someone else will be able to be there to help. The notes are good and important, but the law of the volunteer is: If you want to make sure you have a group you have to ask specifically. “Can you help?” You will get your shares of no’s but when you are finished you will know the size of your group.

One summer we wanted to create new shelves for the elementary classroom. We had hired an excellent teacher (she must have been because a group of her parents followed her.) Three of the new dads had latched onto the project. And every Saturday all summer long they were at school working on the project. It was like the three amigos together having a great time. My wife asked them one day, “So, did you three hang out together at your old school?” “We didn’t even know each other.”

Projects create friendships and multiple benefits. (Those shelves are over twenty-five years old and still beautiful.) Having a common goal unites people and creates friendship and camaraderie.

Each of us have our own special projects that can use the involvement of excited parents.

Picnics

Spending time, either in the classroom or on the school grounds is great for parent involvement. They get to see and appreciate the campus in an unhurried way. (They also might see projects that need doing – and volunteer.) Children love having their parents on campus (especially if they are not being told to hurry up and get in the car.) Picnics lend themselves to sack races, three legged races, eggs on the spoon and any other assortment of fun. Picnic food is always good, and you are creating memories for the children and connections for parents with the staff and other parents.

School day parties – Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentines, St. Patrick’s and more.

Again, we are creating great memories for our children. Not all of the parents will be able to attend but for those that do they will experience the love and care that the teachers (and the school) have for their children. Special food and a special time create another series of memories and interactions.

Birthday Party

The Montessori celebration of life for each child’s birthday is a great milestone both for the child and for the parent. There is nothing better for a parent then to watch the excitement in the eyes of their child as they celebrate their birthday with their “school family.” Our traditional celebration was to put a candle in the middle of the ellipse and the birthday child took a globe and walked around the candle once for each year of their celebration.

We asked parents to send in a couple of photos representing each year of the child’s life. Then the birthday child carried each photo around the ellipse showing them to the class. The giggles and the laughter of seeing the birthday child in a way that they had never seen them before – as a newborn, as a one-year-old etc. was a delight for the children. There is something special for both child and parent when the child is the center of attention. Parents were always invited to stay for lunch.

In our school we served lunch each day but did not serve dessert so if a parent brought a cake it was an extra special celebration.

Grandparent's day

Another memory building experience for our children. Another feather for a school that involves the family. Interestingly, you get a lot of grandparents to attend. They make it a priority. Our program would start at 10 A.M with the children participating in a circle time presentation that led into a mini open house where the children would demonstrate their lessons for the grandparents. We would have a short playground time and have lunch together. During the morning a staff member would take pictures of each grandparent and child and would present the photo to the grandparents before they left. You are building an amazing multi-generational family bond.

Field Days

Another memory making, and parent solidifying event, full of fun and activity.

Field trips

Field trips have become more complex over the years between government regulations, transportation issues, legal concerns (car seats etc.), safety issues and staffing. But a few well-planned excursions (to a farm, botanical garden, children's museum, concert etc.) add to the richness of your curriculum. Surprisingly, in a school of dual-career households, many parents signed up to be part of the experience. Yes, while they did it for their children, it also became a "family" marker of involvement. An indirect aim of a field trip is that parents get to see, up-close, the amazing behavior of trained Montessori children in a setting outside of the classroom.

Fall Festival – Halloween

It is fun to dress up, play games and eat fun food. A school wide party is the thing to bring families together. Short term committees (people getting to know each other) to set up games, run a carnival, create the food – and don't forget cleanup. It is worth the short-term effort to create long term memories and to continue the bonding process.

"Community" fund raising

Every school is in a different stage of their growth. Early on fundraising may be for survival and we latch on to many fundraising programs – candy, books, toys, coffee – and the list goes on. While some of the fundraising projects can raise a chunk of money it comes with a social price. Parents are mostly happy to do a fund raiser, but they are using their social capital to sell fifty cent bars of candy for a dollar. And

where is the fun in that? It is not the best use of parent time and influence. And when all of these fundraising projects are done on their own. It builds no community.

Now, while the money is important (and often very needed) it does not make real use or contribute to the family community. Strategic parenting requires a fundraising vehicle that brings people together, creating friendships, fun and excitement (Oh! And money.)

Now depending on the economic make up of your school there are various types of fundraisers that can meet the needs of significant funds and involving the school family together. **Golf tournaments** work if a sizable portion of your school are golfers and are in that economic bracket. Committees working together gather prizes and run the tournament.

Celebrity dinner

Finding a speaker, personality, athlete that people would enjoy hearing while dining up-scale or down country and people would be willing to pay a premium. The dinner committee and event committee offer possibilities for fun and fellowship – along with the work. Modest financial returns on effort.

Auction

An auction offers the most activity to engage all the constituencies of the school. Multiple committees are formed. The activities last for months before the event. During this time there is created a close bond among the parents. Working together is different than working alone. This common effort strengthens the parental bonds within the school. Everybody finds a place to serve and usually a place to serve that they really enjoy.

Running an auction is a full-time activity absorbing the energy of the parent body. Therefore, the economic outcome has to be worth it in the parent's perspective but for the school the indirect benefit is bonding the families together.

An auction bonding story.

One of the committees, I think it was either decorations or gift baskets met at someone's house, and they worked and talked, laughed and had fun. Midnight came and went. And the fun continued. Nobody wanted to leave. Somewhere around two or so the host went to the kitchen and prepared breakfast for everyone. Bonding (and memories) for sure.

Auction Committees:

Tickets

Marketing

Item procurement

Cataloging

Item presentation (gift baskets etc.)

Working the event (runners, gofers, MC)

Decorating

Set up

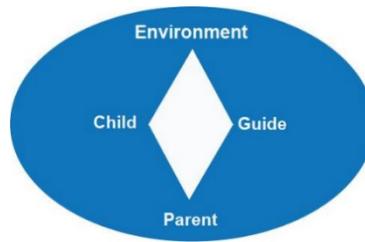
Check out

Clean up

It takes all hands-on deck.

Even though the auction is a fundraiser it is also a celebration of school life. The auction is an elegant affair with great food. There is the excitement of bidding especially when the live auction goes competitive. And there is dancing. It is a party. People invite their friends (extra money coming into the school.) In fact, the friends begin to look forward to the auction each year. The auction becomes kind of a school tradition creating great memories and fun. It is a strategic parent event. And it is a great time to unveil your “new” school video sharing the amazing accomplishments of the children in the wonderful place that they call school.

Strategic Montessori Parenting



Stage # 4

Creating Commitment and Loyalty

This is the most challenging stage of Strategic Parenting. This part doesn't come by requirements or demands nor by agreements and contracts. It comes from an overwhelming feeling of love. Love is not the usual word we use with adults about schools. Our children love us. They love their school. They love their teachers. They love their experience. And it is part of that experience that we are trying to share with our parents.

Montessorians, above all others, understand the significance of the indirect aim. In fact, the indirect aims, of say practical life, far exceed the direct aims. This holds true for strategic parenting. If we understand this parenting truism – “I have great affection for anybody who loves my child.” We begin to see how our actions with and for the child create a bond and a response from the parents.

Electronics help you love

Years ago, I began sharing with teachers at conferences and seminars this question. “What is your least favorite electronic device, but it is the most effective parenting tool you have?” Very seldom would teachers find the answer. Ready? The telephone answering machine. (I told you it was a long time ago.) Then, I would go on to explain the parenting power of the device. “Every day on your break call three of your parents and share something unique or great that their child had accomplished that day.” The teachers would respond, “But there is nobody home.” “Exactly, because you are not looking for a conversation but are making a positive report.” “You do this every week in September, every week in October and November. You do it all year.” “Your phone calls make you the child's champion (and almost as awesome as a grandparent in your pride of the child's achievements.)” So, that when the time comes that you need to discuss a ticklish matter you are welcomed with open arms instead of crossed arms.”

We have moved along way from the days of telephone answering machines but not from the need to positively report. So, what do modern teachers/guides do? Text. Again, you are still not looking for a conversation but in giving a positive report. The outcome is still the same – you are the child's champion. And the truism is proven again, “I love whoever loves my child.”

Photos

Times have changed since the Brownie camera. (Either you know the Brownie camera or you don't, but you are not using one.) Your texting device gives you the ability to take and send pictures. This is real living color, almost in real time. Getting to see your child work or play when you are not able to be there has a special tug on the heart. You are on the other end of that tug.

Child's inventory

A simple piece of paper that says, "I want to know your child better." Includes such things as full name, what name do they go by, pets, favorite color, favorite food, brothers and sisters, favorite things, what do they like to do, favorite book, favorite song, indoor or outdoor child, hobbies, and other pertinent questions to help the teacher see the child in a full perspective. The "inventory" is like a first date – getting to know you. Caring about the details of the child's life speaks to the character and quality of the educational experience.

Parent conferences

Are we back to this again? Yes, but with a different understanding of the indirect aim of all conferences and interactions with parents. Yes, you are reporting while you are taking every advantage to teach. A report of progress with a touch of what you can do at home. With "what you can do at home" parents will be thinking flash cards or math while you are sharing the essence of practical life that can be carried out at home. Parents tend to equate practical life with meaningless non-academic activity. The character virtues that flow from practical life – perseverance, tenacity, finishing what you start, order etc. are characteristics of successful adults. (Nobody has taught parents about practical life.) And the biggest bonus of practical life is the muscular preparation for writing and reading. (Nobody ever taught that to parents either.) Practical life chores at home enhance academic and intellectual development. Parent conferences provide a great learning venue for parents.

Parenting classes

With the right approach these classes become "The secrets of Montessori nobody told you." And "Why Montessori works almost like magic." Varying your topics and approach gives vibrancy to the education. "What you should have in your medicine cabinet" sparks interest.

Headmistress/Headmaster Dinners

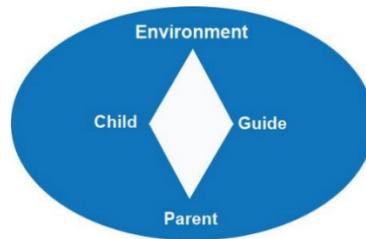
There is something special about being invited to the school Head's house for dinner. Kind of the opposite of going to the principal's office. We've held the dinners in various formats. We've done buffets for up to 40 families. (We did have 40 dinner plates.) Everything in Strategic Parenting has a direct and indirect aim. Obviously, the direct aim is to get to know your parents better. And surprise, for them to get to know you. After all, they trust you with their most precious possession. Again, it is a social activity.

We eventually came to a model that successfully met a number of indirect aims. We changed our buffet evenings to a sit-down dinner for 16. The guest list for each evening was a reflection of the classrooms. We would invite toddler parents and their teachers one night. On another evening it might be

elementary parents and staff. The following week it might be preschool. We would do one dinner or two per week. I think we did three one week to be able to finish the roster. We learned that it wasn't a race but an enjoyable evening of like-minded adults who all had a similar goal – giving their children the best educational experience possible. The indirect aim of sit-down dinners by class allows people to get to know their children's classmates' parents. (Try not to say that three times fast.)

An interesting anecdote from the dinners. At the end of dessert one of the parents asked, "Well?" "Well, what?" "What's the pitch?" "Oh, there's no pitch." "You are not asking for money or anything?" "No, it is just a time for us to get to know each other." Did we miss a good opportunity to raise money? (Wine and dine.) The reality is that you can always ask for money – from your friends but you have to make friends first. Strategic Parenting.

Strategic Montessori Parenting



Stage #5

Being there for them

This is the part of our life that does not appear in contracts, enrollment forms or even training. It is the part of our life that goes above and beyond. You might even say it falls under the category of love – and that makes it delicate and demanding.

When we start this Montessori journey, we feel that just doing a superior job in the environment is all that is required. (And just having a superior school is enough to ensure our longevity.) With real-life experience comes an understanding of all the other factors that impact your ability to do the job you love.

The nature of the child

In Montessori, we nurture our children wonderfully but there are two other influences that either help our nurturing or detract from it. One is the nature of the child and the other is family nurturing. Our advantage in Montessori is that we factor in the nature of the child in our teaching because we understand that the child is the curriculum. This “factoring” in Montessori has a name. It is called observation. It is the key skill in your success as a “Montessori” teacher. Dr. Montessori writes that if you cannot observe you cannot teach. Gaining this skill is a matter of practice, patience, time, experience, humility and understanding. In Strategic Montessori Parenting we are introducing the DISC personality assessment to help give you an additional context to understand what you are observing.

Dynamics of the family

The second influence (and the most delicate to deal with) is family nurturing. In a Montessori school, there are twin peaks of education that happen outside of the classroom – educating parents about Montessori and educating parents about child nurturing. Most of our parents come to us with a vague idea (and usually erroneous) about what Montessori education is. They know us by reputation. They know us because of academic excellence. They know us because they have seen other Montessori children who exhibit amazing character, focus and control. They want us to wave the Montessori Magic wand and create their Harvard bound, happy, adjusted, amazing child. Abracadabra! I wish it were that

easy, but you know the reality that produces these amazing results. That is why Strategic Montessori Parenting bridges that chasm between parent's fantasy and Montessori reality.

As we have outlined in stage #1, parent education is the beginning but it is here in stage #5 that the magic (if there is any) happens. Our joy of the three-year classroom allows us to see the "magic" of transformation in the children. Adult transformation is much more complex. While children have no prior experience to cloud their actions and hinder their transformation; adults bring multiple levels of complexity to the parenting table. They have their own childhood experience, they have their own personality, they have their school experience, they now have work experience and adult relationships. They are now working through their own child rearing and whatever bits and pieces of parenting they have read or assimilated. For them to emerge as Montessori parents without support is an unrealistic expectation.

Nurturing the family

Now, this is where we come in. We didn't ask to be mother or father confessors, coaches or parenting guides but when you see someone drowning, what do you do? You help. But you have to learn the same techniques that life-guards learn – don't let the person drowning, drown you with them. There is a lot to learn about what that means with parenting.

Children have changed and yet they haven't. Technology and wealth have created on the surface a different type of child but underneath the child still retains all of those needs, desires and potentials that have always belonged to children. What has changed are the parents. Veteran teachers can tell you the difference. These new parents were raised by a different generation than raised their grandparents. Some might even say that these new parents were hardly raised but were the recipients of a host of conflicting parenting styles, philosophies, indulgence and some might say neglect.

But they've brought their children to you. And to do the job that you want to do with the children you will have to help these parents to become parents. On the surface, you have well-educated parents (just not in child rearing.) Successful, capable and accomplished adults, knowledgeable in their own fields but not in the field that you know best – children.

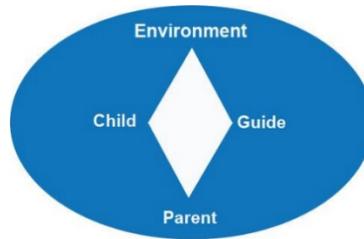
It is ironic that this parent generation, raised with such concern for self-esteem, may prove itself incapable of meeting their parenting challenge without great support. Words that might define them might include embarrassed. Competent in their profession but not having a clue on how to nurture a three-year old but unable to ask for help. They are uncertain and confused on how to meet their child's needs. Popular culture does not embrace a Montessori approach to life or learning. If you read one parenting book, you might be okay. (Depending on which one you read.) if you read two or even three, the philosophies more than likely contradict each other which creates frustration in parents who really want to be told how to help their children. Many have a sense of guilt over their neglect of the nurturing and training of their child, and they become indulgent, both materially and in allowing behaviors that are damaging to their child. They feel alone and unsupported.

This is where you come in. Why should they listen to you? Why should they seek you out? Two reasons. One you love their child. Anyone who loves my child has a special place in my heart and esteem. Second, you are a professional. You have training. You have knowledge. You have experience. Even if you are young, you will age (or is that mature) quickly in your first years of teaching. Your earnestness, when you

are young, does count for something with parents. And the wisdom that you need surrounds you in your co-workers and school. And when you realize that being a Montessori guide includes the “big” children as well you begin to prepare – because you are there for them as well.

This leads into our next section – the use of the DISC personality assessment.

Strategic Montessori Parenting



Stage #6

DISC Personality Assessment

Disc personality assessment with parents

Sharing with parents – in a language they understand – changes the dynamics of the relationship. Your Montessori experience has given you a new way to look at things and a new way to express those new concepts. Most parents do not understand – yet – the concepts or the language that we are communicating. And to be successful with parents we need to communicate in a way that they understand. As you learn about the DISC personality assessment you will find that each personality type actually speaks their own language. And saying it louder or slower or again will still not communicate until you speak their language. Sharing in the language of the recipient is a significant benefit to the whole educational/life relationship.

Sharing with Mom and Dad often requires speaking two languages. One spouse may be a bottom-line personality and the other is a dozen detail person (they always seem to attract each other. 😊) A personal note, when we recently re-did our own DISC assessment, one of my wife's characteristics is to ask questions – she just wants to know. So, it wasn't about questioning what she was told, she just wanted an answer. It wasn't about me; it was about her. That saves a lot of misunderstood feelings.

The DISC personality assessment is a marvelous tool to enhance observation

Observation is “the” key Montessori difference. If you cannot observe you cannot be a Montessori guide says Dr. Montessori, because so much of the real curriculum is based on observing where the child is and what the child needs. The DISC assessment gives texture to what you are observing and understanding of how the child operates which emanates from his/her personality.

DISC and the child

The DISC assessment for the child is captured by a series of picture stories featuring four Bots (robots) each performing a different action within the story. The child is asked to choose which Bot they feel is most like them and then to choose the Bot which feels the least like them. From these picture stories

emerge a portrait of the personality of the child. The assessment gives additional insight to what the guide observes and is then able to act accordingly.

DISC and the family

The successful use of DISC with children naturally leads to using DISC with parents. Parents need to understand the value of the information about their child and how to use that information to enhance their interactions with their own child. (It also helps to understand our spouses better. 😊)

When the child and the parents take the DISC assessment, the guide has an additional way to understand the family dynamics and also to help parents better communicate and understand their own child's personality.

Further, when the guide shares their own DISC assessment with parents there comes a new level of communication (and trust) because they are all now speaking a language of common understanding.

DISC and staff

Knowing the style of each of your coworkers creates a more harmonious working environment. Learning to speak the native language of each personality type changes the working relationship dramatically. It becomes a major component of success as you leverage the strengths of your school community. Montessori guides are tremendously flexible but asking people to function in areas and in ways that are not in their optimum strength is to waste the power and the passion that each personality brings to your Montessori community. Learning to lead from the strengths of your community undoes a lot of the workplace frustration and creates a powerful performing team.

The strengths of DISC

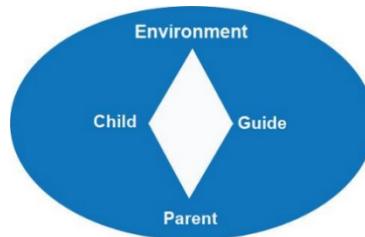
Many people have taken a personality assessment, but our use of the DISC assessment as presented by Personality Insights of Atlanta brings a new dimension to the use of DISC. The ease of the program with its on-line reporting makes administrating the assessment and getting results simple. But Personality Insights adds a significant factor to the use of DISC and that is – how to use the information effectively once you know what it is.

Personality Insights has a wide range of products. The first three that are most significant to Strategic Montessori Parenting are the child, teen and adult assessments.

DISC and the student - An indirect success

Once a student understands their own personality dimension, they gain the ability to understand not only their own actions but the actions and reactions of others. Understanding is a priceless gift that most of us wish that we had achieved earlier in our life. Understanding gives clarity to the world around us.

Strategic Montessori Parenting



Stage #7

Tracking involvement

Fund raising

There are a lot of metrics you can use to gauge successful parent involvement. And you probably should use them all. Donations is one. Attendance another. Participation. Volunteer time. Use of influence. Everyone has something different to bring to your making of “stone soup.”

Fund raising is a significant area of involvement. Many schools do an “annual fund” drive seeking to raise funds from the parent body. There are parents who have the ability to give above the cost of tuition while others struggle with affording the tuition. There is a great deal of psychology that goes into successful fund raising. And there are many consultants and practitioners whose services you may employ especially if you are raising substantial amounts for new buildings or land. But fundraising in the average year is often an exercise in school loyalty. I am not saying that the money isn’t vital or needed but you have to make the case for giving.

Parents need to feel that their giving is consequential; that the goal is meaningful. This is often a creative tight rope. Nobody wants to give to pay the light bill (you will just have to pay for it again next month.) Even if that is your desperate need. Raising scholarship funds from within the school has its own set of challenges. An actual conversation some thirty years ago (when life seemed to be a little less materialistic) “Well, if they can’t afford it, they shouldn’t come.” Raising money directly for endowments tends to go counter to the “What’s in it for me?” attitude of some.

Specific goals, specific benefits for now will fuel your fund raising. Parents are willing to give if they see the benefit and can see the progress. Successful fundraising is built on both loyalty and reality (your “vision” is amorphous unless it is concrete.)

You don’t want to squander your parent’s loyalty or abuse their time both are essential ingredients of successful fundraising. You can wear them out with candy sales, coupon booklets, jewelry sales, popcorn and on and on where the returns are usually minimal. (I know when you are desperate that \$500 or a \$1000 doesn’t look minimal but if it gets in the way of raising \$50,000 or \$100,000 it is not a good tradeoff.)

Having said all that, this does not preclude sales “to” your parents. They may like candy and popcorn, jewelry, and books. If they don’t have to do the work, you have not squandered their time. And they have a choice to buy or not buy. Again, too many of anything can make you look like a 7-11. (I like 7-11.)

Short story: We created a Lakemont (our school) Fan Club. You could join for ten dollars. And for each five memberships we bought a ceiling fan for the classroom. It was a cute way to achieve a short-term goal with results that you could see and “feel.”

Fund raising commitments and expectations need to be outlined and understood long before hand. (More on parent commitment later.)

Volunteer time

There are five valuable outcomes of successful volunteering.

1. Volunteers achieve something that will enhance the school
2. There is little out of pocket cost.
3. The correct selection of volunteers brings expertise/excellence to the project.
4. A good volunteer experience gives a sense of pride and accomplishment to the volunteer.
5. Volunteering bonds parents to the school and to each other.

Successful volunteering starts with the concept of not wasting parent’s time. Parents must see value in what they are offering. It is also helpful if the projects are not open-ended – never finishing. Parents need to see a goal line and the ability to see the completion of a project.

Successful volunteering happens when you match parent’s skills with school needs. Asking someone to sew who doesn’t sew is a recipe for frustration. When you slot in the correct parent with the correct skill it doesn’t become a chore or a burden. A skilled computer parent goes click, click, click and smiles and asks, “Is there anything else you need?”

Unsuccessful volunteering outcomes are those with seemingly never-ending work, projects that are frustrating and/or parents who botch the whole assignment. (Paper cut poorly or the wrong size for booklets comes to mind.)

Attached in the addenda is a sample parent skills survey.

“Parent” report cards

This may be the ultimate tracking proposal. It requires a certain boldness and confidence to institute. The truism that you cannot expect what you do not inspect holds for parent involvement as well. There are three parts to this reporting system – the text, the exam and the report card.

First, you have to inform parents what your reasonable expectations are. You will find that in the “Partnering Commitment” form in the addenda. They must understand upfront school expectations. Then, they sign.

The second part is the “all year exam” of them successfully completing their assignments.

The third part (and somewhat tricky part) is the presentation of their “report card.” You may want to change its name to “commitment completion” or some other less “threatening” name. (Remember, most of your parents did not have a Montessori education and they may still carry trauma from their school experience.)

The report, there is a copy in the addenda, is fairly simple – just a recording of their involvement. This report is certainly something you do NOT send in the mail. We used the report as part of our re-enrollment process. If parent involvement is a core value for your school, then some type of metric is required.

The re-enrollment process is not about just a check but a continuing commitment from home to school and school to home. There are days when we wished the parents would stay home, stay out, stay away but that is not the success formula for helping parents become Montessori parents.

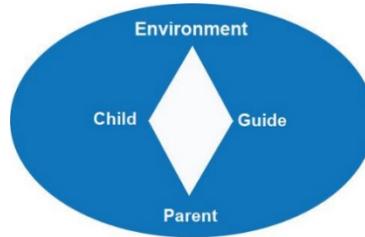
So, what could go wrong with the process? (Excuse me, while I take a break to laugh.) First, let’s share the wonderful conferences from happy committed parents and their joy and satisfaction with their partnership. And then, there is a conversation that went, “As part of the re-enrollment process, we would like to share with you your involvement for the year.” The mother looked at her blank form (not a check mark anywhere) and said, “This is insulting.” Our reply was, “We don’t mean to be insulting but we are just reporting on the completion of the commitment you made.” That conference didn’t turn out to be a winner but all we lost was tuition. Then there was another conference where the mother had a similar checkless report. I don’t remember if she was at the verge of tears (but it would make a good story) and she asked, “Does this mean that my child can’t return?” (Now, let’s not be stupid about losing too much money.) “This means that if you want your child to continue you must become involved.” And for the next six or eight months before she moved, she became a paragon of check marks and involvement.

You have to decide how significant parent involvement (and its benefits) are to your school and your children and the price and cost of what you are willing to invest.

Influence

We are all well aware that current parents (and their children) are walking billboards for the school. The more satisfied (not just happy) your parents are with their understanding of their child’s education, their understanding of Montessori and their understanding of their role in this, the better they are able to share and advertise your excellence. When parents feel valued, their satisfaction is recorded in words and recommendations. An example of this phenomena was reported one Monday morning by a parent who had attended a child’s birthday party over the weekend. “You could tell by the behavior which were Lakemont children.”

Strategic Montessori Parenting



Stage #8

Bits and Pieces of Parenting Wisdom

Parent advisory boards

Parent advisory boards sound like a good idea until they begin to think that they run the school. If you need parent input, ask for it one family at a time. In groups, people tend to want to throw their weight around (even sweet parents.) The challenge with an advisory group is they see their part of the picture and not the whole. The challenge of advisory groups is that if you don't do what they suggest you will be accused of not listening to them. As the head of school, you have the delicate job of keeping everything in balance – which in itself is a job.

Satisfying constituencies

You will never satisfy every constituency of the school so choose those hills on which you wish to plant your flag (and hopefully, it won't be a hill on which you need to die.) Satisfying constituency is a challenge. As the head of school, you already have six constituencies you need to answer to:

1. What does Mom want for her child?
2. What does Dad want for his child?
3. As the child grows older, what does the child want?
4. What do your teachers want?
5. And what does government, accreditation groups etc. want?
6. And if you ever get to it, "What do you want?"

Everyone is focused on their corner of the world. We had four divisions in our school, toddler, preschool, elementary and High School. If each asked for \$100 and you only had \$25 available no matter who you gave it to everyone was unhappy. Those who got nothing and the one who received \$25. It's lonely at the top. Remember your constituency is the whole school.

Parent Problems

Is it cynical to say that parent and problems is redundant? Good parenting can reduce (not eliminate) parent concerns. However, when concerns do arise (and you know they will) there are ways to handle the challenges – head on or deflect and ignore. A few experiences, and by and large, you need to have your own to make yourself a believer in choosing one alternative over the other. However, here is solid advice that pertains 99% of the time – do NOT send out a general letter about the problem, even when it seems like the thing to do. Just because five or ten percent of parents are upset with you the other ninety percent are not and probably have no idea of what is troubling some of the other parents. Do not make your problems bigger. Deal directly with the troubled area – and probably not in groups. It seems like that would be more efficient but one disgruntled family out of your ten can sabotage your reasonable decision that the rest would be happy with.

Making School Expectations Clear

Busy parents appreciate knowing exactly what is required of them. All changes in school procedure, calendar and requirements need to be announced months in advance and preferably before reenrollment. Giving a rationale for changes - usually directed at improving communications, operations or parent involvement helps with accomplishing the new initiatives.

Fee Structure

One legitimate parent gripe is the feeling of being nicked and dined (even if they are not.) It is the feeling that contributes to a decreased sense of connectivity and family. Add all your fees together, every one of them, and raise your tuition by that amount. Your parents may gulp but they are not paying any more than they would normally. Now, where you turn that gulp into a real parent bonus is when you start to list everything that is now covered by tuition. You can come up with a pretty impressive list. Lunch, classroom supplies, field trips, books, lab fees etc. You have taken a possible negative and turned it into a major parent friendly benefit.

Parent Information

If you are going to serve your parents effectively (we assume you are already doing that with your students) they need more information – even if all of them don't read it or read it all. That part is frustrating, but it also gives you the ability to deflect parent ire when something does not please them about school operations etc. and you are able to say, "That was communicated to you in October or January, it is in the handbook or on-line." Then they have to own that the communication gap was on their part. Just like in the environment, presentations are made more than once. The more you communicate the better chance you have of "seed falling on good ground and giving you a great harvest"

The first sharing and gathering of information should start with your application. Adding a "Family Views" form to your application package (included in the addenda) begins your ability to focus on parents as individuals instead of a group. You also may find benefit in classroom surveys from time to time.

A major survey that every school needs is a blind “Marketing Survey.” (Also included in the addenda.) Blind, because you are not asking for names but financial and marketing information. Age, education and income help you to make informed decisions about tuition and fundraising potential. You are also asking marketing questions on why they chose the school, how did they hear about the school, what is the most significant aspects that determined their choice. You need to ask those questions because you need to know and otherwise the survey appears to be just about income – which you really do need to know. The year before our first survey I underestimated our parent income by eighty to a hundred thousand.

The survey also helps you to make valid assumptions about tuition increases. Expert wisdom says to charge what it costs to run your school but to get to that point you need parental financial information. For every five parents who may struggle with a tuition increase there are ninety-five who can handle it well.

Transition Meetings

You need to plan your transition meetings in the fall. Transition? The moving from one class to the next. The preschool has two transition points. Continuing for the kindergarten year in your school and transitioning to your elementary. The lure of free public education is often very strong. Your parenting bonds need to be stronger. Transitioning to first grade also has that siren song of free education – no tuition. The stronger your education program both for children and for parents will allow you to glide over much of the transition. These discussions need to formally happen before parents get too far down the road with thinking about alternatives. We also had programs where preschoolers could visit the elementary for a morning or elementary the junior high.

Volunteer calls

There are times when you have a special project that requires say ten people. We tend to send out an announcement stating that. If you absolutely need ten you cannot rely on a broad-based announcement. Everybody thinks someone else will be there. And you wind up with two helpers instead of ten. This is a repeat of an earlier segment but if you need help call and ask. You get a yes or no, but you have a semi-guaranteed result.

Toxic Parents

Yes, there are toxic parents. Their toxicity comes in all kinds of shapes and situations. It is a wonderful feeling to take a negative situation and create a positive outcome. Parents who want to change or “improve” your Montessori program skirt the edge of toxicity. Good Montessori education can help many parents make the transition to involvement and understanding. However, there will be some, despite your best efforts, who will not embrace your parenting model. Wish them well as you wish them on the road to finding what they are looking for.

Parents and enrollment and re-enrollment

The unseen current that carries parents through the enrollment and then the re-enrollment cycle is the emphasis placed on parenting. You stay with your friends. You stay with your family. Strategic parenting creates those bonds and that loyalty.

The Feeding and Care of Parents

We probably saved the most important Strategic parenting item for last – the feeding of parents. A great part of parenting success is food and spending time at the table together. This is how parents get to know each other and bond to the school. We served dinner before every parenting meeting. We served lunch at the end of every help day (They were good leftovers from Friday's lunch.) We served lunch for grandparent's day. Every school party, Christmas, Valentine's Day involved food. We served a hot lunch at school every day – tablecloths, napkins, China, crystal - and the parents were always invited. Does it take work to serve food? Of course. Does it cost money? Of course. Is it worth it? You will have to answer that on your way to excellent strategic parenting.

The Indirect Aim of Parenting

Can you make parents care – indirectly.

Can you help them be better parents – indirectly.

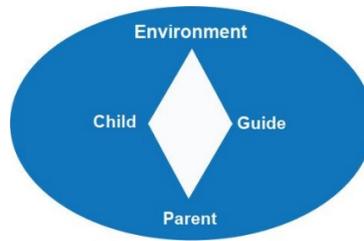
Can you help the children – indirectly.

Can you educate parents – indirectly.

So, what can you do directly?

You can create an environment so amazing, so filled with love, beauty and wonder that people will want to be a part of it. And in being part of it they can't but help to become transformed. And then, you will have truly succeeded in your parenting.

Strategic Montessori Parenting



Addenda

Parent Registration Survey

Partnering Commitment

Partnering Activities for the Year

Re-enrollment Conference Survey

Marketing Survey

Parent Skills Survey

Child's Inventory

DISC Personality Assessment

Parent registration survey

How did you hear about our school?

What are factors that have contributed to your choosing our school for your child?

Mark all that apply: #1 most important, #2 etc.

Campus _____

Cost _____

Educational program _____

Interaction with staff/administration _____

Location _____

Reputation _____

Other _____

What are your personal goals for your child?

What are your goals for your child's educational experience?

What are your expectations from the school to help you reach your family goals?

What is your understanding of your part in the school process to reach your goals?

PARTNERING COMMITMENT

The success of my child is built on the effective partnering between home and school. Therefore, for the benefit of my child:

1. I will do my part in the festivals, parties and programs so that my child will not only have wonderful memories of good times, but of a parent who made it a priority to be involved.
2. I will attend all five Parent Classes and will make my parenting responsibilities a priority.
3. I will visit the classroom and observe my child one hour a semester. I will have at least four parent conferences each year.
4. I will attend one Help Day each semester.
5. I will follow all of the precepts and guidelines of the Parent Handbook so that my child may take full advantage of the educational opportunities.
6. I will be responsible for contributing a minimum of \$720.00 to the annual enhancement fund. This can be accomplished either by direct donation or by working in the various school fund raising projects.
7. I will resolve conflicts in the manner prescribed in the handbook. I understand that failure to follow these steps of resolution will break the partnering agreement and cause immediate withdrawal of my child.

Date

Signature of Mother

Date

Signature of Father

PARTNERING ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR

Name

Our program is designed to support you with information, interaction, education and opportunities to create memories with your child. As we made this commitment to partner with you, we asked you to make that same commitment to your child (and to school) by signing a commitment form.

Your commitment has been reflected this school year by your participation in the following activities:

New Year's Party	_____	Open House	_____
Headmaster's Dinner	_____	Feb. Parent Meeting	_____
Picnic	_____	Int'l Festival	
Oct. Parent Meeting	_____	*Committee Work	_____
Nov. Parent Meeting	_____	*Attendance	_____
Parent Conference	_____	Parent Conference	_____
Classroom Observation	_____	Classroom Observation	_____
Auction		March Parent Meeting	_____
*Committee Work	_____	April Parent Meeting	_____
*Solicitation	_____	Help Day	_____
*Guests	_____	Parent Conference	_____
*Attendance	_____	Picnic	_____
Christmas Program	_____	End of School Program	_____
Help Day	_____		
Parent Conference	_____		
Annual Fund	_____		

Re-enrollment Conference Survey
(Please bring completed form to conference)

Student's Name

What attracted you to Lakemont?

What expectations have been met?

What expectations have **NOT** been met?

What have you gained that you were not expecting?

What have been the best things your child has gained this year?

What **ONE** significant activity, improvement or program should we consider implementing?

Parent Skills Survey

Each of us have skills that could benefit our children by being used for our school. Would you please mark the skills that you possess and the committees that you would like to serve on? When there is a need for advice or expertise in a particular area, we will be able to match a parent with a project that they will enjoy doing for their child's school. Thank you for supporting Lakemont with your skills and talents.

NAME

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT

BASIC JOB DESCRIPTION

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE/SKILLS

WHAT JOB RESOURCES AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS WOULD BE USEFUL TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

PLEASE CHECK CAPABILITIES YOU MAY HAVE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

<p><u>Classroom Support:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Animal Care</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Art</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Decorating</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Library</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Material Making</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Photography</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reading With Students</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sewing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sports</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wood Working</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify)</p> <p><u>Computer:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Programming</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Repairs</p> <p><u>Hospitality & Fun Activities:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fall Festival/Parties/ Dinners/Picnics</p>	<p><u>Fundraising Leadership:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Corporations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Foundations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Auction</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Annual Fund</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Golf Tournament</p> <p><u>Communications/Publications:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Committee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Publicity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Desktop Publishing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Word Processing</p> <p><u>Teacher Appreciation:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Co-ordinate projects</p> <p><u>Maintenance:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Auto Mechanics</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Electrical</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping & Plants</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Painting</p>
--	---

	___ Plumbing ___ Repairs
--	-----------------------------

PLEASE LIST HOBBIES AND SKILLS

DETAILS OF COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Classroom Support

Sewing/Knitting - meeting the sewing needs of the classrooms, helping with knitting projects.

Decorating - Blending available expertise with needs and materials; helping coordinate decorating at parties, carnivals, social events, Baccalaureate, Graduation, Teas, etc.

Woodworking - Wood working projects for the classroom and maintenance needs.

Photography - Making use of the dark room by students with available photography instruction; designate photographers to record school events.

Material Making - Organize the available community resources and apply these talents to the materials needs to be made for the classroom.

Animal Care - Assist in taking responsibility for animal care.

Library - Helping librarian

Sports - Working with staff and parents able and interest in providing coaching and assistance for school sports program.

Art - Use artistic capabilities for benefit of the school program

Reading to Students - be available to read and listen to students read to you

Computer

Programming - use capabilities to aid the school

Repairs - trouble shoot problems and make repairs

Hospitality & Fun Activities

Hospitality - help with the major good times of the school year - picnics, parties, carnivals, dinners

Fundraising Leadership

Foundations - Work with parents to secure foundation grants

Corporations - work with parents to secure corporate donations

Auction - Provide leadership for Auction committees

Annual Fund - work with parents to secure annual pledges

Golf Tournament - Help plan and promote annual tournament

Communications/Publications

Telephone Committee - be a part of an active telephone committee when communications needs arise

Publicity Committee - work with a creative group seeking to achieve positive publicity for Lakemont and work with Marketing Director and others to sell the school

Word Processing - parent volunteers to aid the office in data entry for large projects and routine update information

Desk Top Publishing - contribute expertise to improve appearance of school communications

Teacher Appreciation

Co-ordinate Projects - Work with the committee to develop ways to show appreciation to the teaching staff for all they do.

Landscaping Committee Responsibilities

Maintenance Committee

Electrical - Take responsibility for minor needs and repairs

Plumbing - Take responsibility for minor needs and repairs

Carpentry - Be available to repair and help build materials

Painting - Help with painting need of school

Repairs - Help make needed minor repairs including mowers, tractor, edger, etc.

Auto Mechanics - Be involved with maintenance and upkeep of school vehicles

Gardening - Providing expertise and help to school gardens

Greenhouse - Helping maintain and make use of the greenhouse to meet school needs for bedding plants, garden plant, science projects and inside plants.

Landscaping - help care and maintain the entrance to the school; seasonal planting, feeding, weeding, etc.

Inside Plants - care and feeding of interior plants

MARKETING SURVEY

PLEASE COMPLETE ONE PER FAMILY

Thank you for helping us profile our existing parent base and gather information for fundraising and marketing materials. Please complete the following:

Demographic information:

- Age:** 20-30
 31-40
 41-50
 50+

Household Income:

- Less than \$20,000
 \$20,000 - \$29,000
 \$30,000 - \$39,000
 \$40,000 - \$49,000
 \$50,000 - \$59,000
 \$60,000 - \$69,000
 \$70,000 - \$79,000
 \$80,000 - \$89,000
 \$90,000 - \$100,000
 \$100,000 - \$125,000
 \$125,000 - \$150,000
 \$150,000 - \$175,000
 \$175,000 - \$200,000
 \$200,000 - \$225,000
 \$225,000 - \$250,000
 \$250,000 - \$275,000
 \$275,000 - \$300,000
 \$300,000 +

Which best describes your household:

- Two full time wage earners
 One full time/one part time
 One wage earner household

Educational Background:

	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
High School Diploma	_____	_____
Technical or Trade School	_____	_____
Bachelors Degree	_____	_____
Masters Degree	_____	_____
PhD or Other	_____	_____

MARKETING SURVEY (PAGE 2)

Indicate which program(s) you are involved with:

- Toddler/Preschool
- Elementary
- Junior High/High School

How did you first learn about Lakemont Academy:

- Friend/word of mouth
- Drove by
- Yellow pages
- Dallas Guide to Private Schools
- Other (please specify)

Rank (in order of importance) the following attributes of Lakemont (1 = most important, 9 = least important).

- Location
- Montessori aspect of program
- Classroom facilities
- Advanced academics
- Christian emphasis of program
- Nurturing care
- Safe environment
- Parent involvement
- Character/values/manners training

All About Me

Helping my teacher know me better

My full name is:

My birthday:

These are the people in my family (and my pets):

Some of my friends are...

My favorite work at school is...

These are a few of my favorite things...

If I could go anywhere, I would go _____.

If I could do anything, I would _____.

This year I hope to learn _____.

Please share anything you would like me to know about you:

DISC Personality Assessment

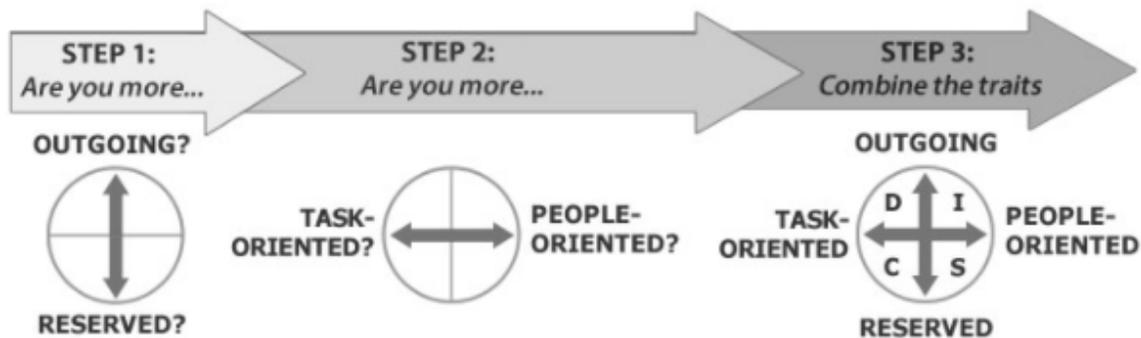


Barbara Fidellow
S/CI

The "DISC" Model of Human Behavior



Barbara, we will be using a concept called the "DISC" Model of Human Behavior in this report. Each letter (D, I, S and C) represents a main personality style. The DISC model is based on the fact that most people have predictable patterns of behavior. The first pattern reflects whether a person is more **OUTGOING** or **RESERVED**. The second pattern reflects whether a person is more **TASK-ORIENTED** or **PEOPLE-ORIENTED**. The two patterns can be visualized in two circular diagrams with opposing traits and then combined into one diagram as shown below.



The circular diagram in Step 3 has four sections like a pie. Each section is a combination of two traits that can be described by the letters D, I, S and C. The main words that we use to describe each personality style are **Dominant (D)**, **Inspiring (I)**, **Supportive (S)** and **Cautious (C)** as shown below.



Each Person is a **UNIQUE BLEND** of ALL FOUR traits. Your assessment shows that your personality blend is: "S/CI." You will learn more about your "S/CI" blend in your Personality Profile Report.

DISC is Easy to Remember



DISC is easy to remember using letters, colors and symbols.

Symbol	Behavior	Key Words	Color Meaning	Symbol Meaning
	OUTGOING and TASK-ORIENTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant • Direct • Demanding • Decisive • Determined • Doer 	<p>GREEN means GO - like a green light in traffic!</p> <p>They are always looking for a TASK to GO DO. They were born ready!</p>	<p>The EXCLAMATION POINT represents being emphatic!</p> <p>They like to face everything head-on!</p>
	OUTGOING and PEOPLE-ORIENTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring • Influencing • Impressionable • Interactive • Impressive • Involved 	<p>RED is highly VISIBLE and BRIGHT</p> <p>They are always easy to spot. The party begins when they show up!</p>	<p>The STAR symbol means they are the star of the show!</p> <p>They make life FUN and EXCITING!</p>
	RESERVED and PEOPLE-ORIENTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive • Stable • Steady • Sweet • Status-quo • Shy 	<p>BLUE is PEACEFUL like a clear blue sky</p> <p>They like things to be calm, relaxed and peaceful. They are so nice!</p>	<p>The PLUS and MINUS represents being accommodating.</p> <p>Plus or minus, either way is okay. They like to please others!</p>
	RESERVED and TASK-ORIENTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cautious • Calculating • Competent • Conscientious • Contemplative • Careful 	<p>YELLOW means CAUTION</p> <p>They like to approach TASKS CAREFULLY. They move through life one calculated step at a time.</p>	<p>The QUESTION MARK represents their inquisitive nature.</p> <p>They have lots of detailed questions, and they need to think things through!</p>

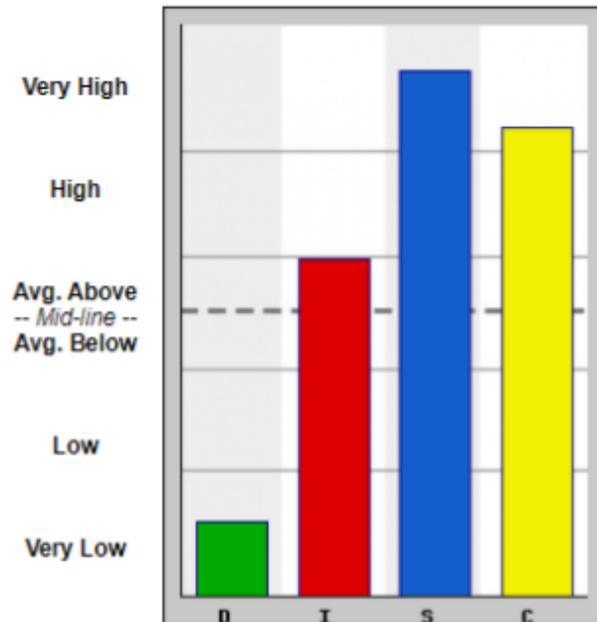
Your Personality Style Blend

Congratulations, Barbara! Your personality style blend is S/CI. By having a SUPPORTIVE / CAUTIOUS / INSPIRING personality style, you tend to naturally be reserved yet positive when interacting with others. Your strength is your ability to sense the feelings and thoughts of others. A graph of your personality style is shown to the right.

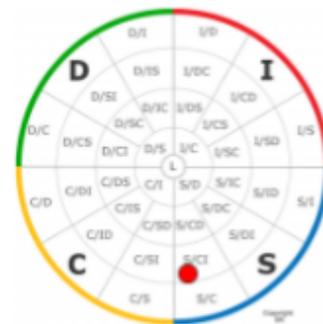
Note: This graph represents your S/CI Style Blend. Please look in the "Graphs" section of this report to see your detailed graphs along with an explanation on how to understand your graphs.

Notice that the "S" is the highest on the chart. That means that you are very people-oriented. The Plus and Minus Sign is your symbol. You are extremely good at being supportive, being a team player and relating to others. People enjoy you. Next, in your graph, the C and I traits are above the midline. That means your C and I traits will support your primary type which is S. C or I traits are usually where you go under stress. When under stress, confronting issues leads to peace. Also, note that in your graph, the D area is below the midline. That means these are blind spots in your life. Using I traits appropriately will bring greater stability and purpose in life.

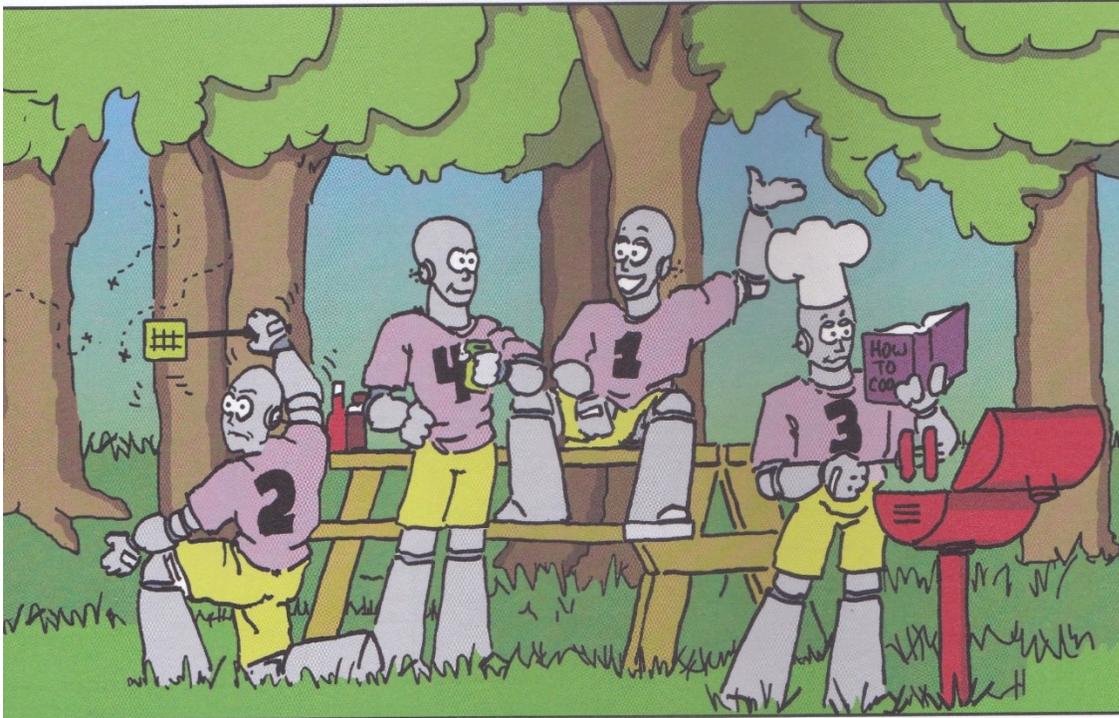
Personality Chart for Barbara



Circle Graph for Barbara



STORY ONE



HAVING A PICNIC

The BOTS have gone to the park for a picnic. Each has found a different way to have fun:

1BOT is waving to some other people and would like it if they joined the picnic! **1BOT** says, "I have more fun when there are lots of people around!"

2BOT is swatting all of the flies and is determined to get rid of all of them. **2BOT** even tries to hit them in the air.

3BOT is making sure the food is cooked just right and tries to do things right all of the time! **3BOT** says, "I'm hungry, and I would rather cook the food myself than have someone else burn it."

4BOT has a good time when everyone else is having fun and likes making people happy! **4BOT** says, "I like to listen to **1BOT** tell stories, because I would rather listen than talk."

Draw a circle around the **BOT** you **FEEL MOST LIKE**.

Then, in the same picture, draw an **X** on the **BOT** you **FEEL LEAST LIKE**.