

04/10/2007

Raffles Montessori Kindergarten
46 Lorong 23 Geylang
Fansida Building
Singapore 388375

Dear Sirs/Mdm

Testimonial

It is difficult to believe that next year Ruiqi, our second child, will be in her third year at Raffles Montessori. It seems like just yesterday that we were dropping off Jinyao, our older child, for the first time to Raffles Montessori.

When Jinyao began at Raffles Montessori, we had little formal knowledge about Montessori. We heard that Montessori was an excellent method of education, but had less understanding about the core principles of it. We had questions. Will the programme allow opportunities for my child to socialize with others? Will the child be able to adapt to the primary education in Singapore after graduation? How does a teacher (they called 'directress') manage a fairly big group of three to six year olds with only one assistant in the classroom?

Our appreciation of the Montessori programme grew as we watched Jinyao and now our second child, Ruiqi progress through the programme, growing and thriving with the other children. We watched our children begin as the smallest children, watching and learning from the older children, and drawing pleasure from their work in practical life, such as transferring, polishing, pouring, etc. We watched them venture into other areas of work gradually and soon, they were not the youngest children but instead the older children, helping the younger children and spending more time on academic work.

If I was asked to describe why the third year of Montessori is important, I would say that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. While two years of Montessori education is good, we fully agree that completing the three-year experience synthesizes the experiences and principles introduced in the first two years. The academic learning, the social skills, the self-confidence, and internal motivation take off spontaneously in the third year. The children have the opportunity to act in a leadership role in the classroom and help others. They also further their foundation in reading, writing, math, social studies and other areas, although the learning is not explicitly categorized into subjects. They have the benefit of being in the same environment for three years in a row, which contributes to a feeling of security with sense of belonging, and developed greater confidence in exploring new learning and experiences in their classroom.

One concern that many parents have is that students in a Montessori programme are not given tests or assessments that primary schools require of their students. Our Jinyao had started his primary school programme at the beginning of this year. For the first time he went through standardized tests, assessments and examinations. We certainly had some concerns that he had never taken any test or exam of this type before but he seemed confident and prepared for the exams based on what he had learnt in school. He scored remarkable grades in his exams in school so far.

Our third child, Jingshun who is now 2 years and 4 months has just been enrolled to the Toddler Community programme at Raffles Montessori. Saving money for College is important, but if that foundation for learning hasn't been laid, the allure of high education may be lost.

Our family have truly enjoyed our experiences with Raffles Montessori and will have no objection to sharing this message from us with parents who may also be having concerns in completing a full cycle of the programme at Raffles Montessori.

Tin Chin Leong & Lai Wai Fong

