

The Children's House News

October 2020



Dear Parents and Grandparents,

Our children are facing greater challenges than we could have ever imagined. When children first started distance learning last year, we all focused on the skills students needed to use technological tools as well as online platforms and resources. With enthusiasm and good nature, teachers and students worked hard to quickly gain these new skills. They had fun seeing each other on their iPads and scheduling virtual get-togethers. As the months went by, the challenges became greater. We saw that staying at home and interacting mainly through a screen hindered children's sense of well-being and connection. The lack of social engagement and activity often led to a lack of motivation. Children can learn and adapt to new tech skills pretty quickly. They are still children, though, and need time and guidance to strengthen the character traits that will help them be independent learners and workers.

You have probably heard the word, "grit," a lot more in the last few years. In 2016, psychologist Angela Duckworth wrote and spoke on grit, defining it as "passion and perseverance for long-term goals;" the ability to remain motivated and determined towards a goal in spite of struggles and challenges. Her work, along with the work of many other educational psychologists and researchers, has shown that grit, perseverance, resilience, and courage are key factors to achieving success, much more so than talent and intelligence. Essentially, a person's ability to set and accomplish goals is much more based on character than it is on skill.

This is not news to the Montessori community, nor is it a new idea to The Children's House. The Montessori classroom is designed to lead children towards developing grit, the trait they will need most to become independent learners as they get older. During the Independent Work Period, students are able to choose work that interests them, and can continue that work as long as they like, and for as many days as they like. The key, of course, is to provide appropriate options for work, options that are not too easy and will offer a certain amount of challenge. These activities will help develop motivation and engagement that will lead to perseverance.

Along with the Montessori environment, "freedom within limits," at The Children's House, we help children learn and know their Good Shepherd, Jesus. With Him, children are able to see that they do not face challenges alone, and can depend on Jesus to always be with them.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."
Isaiah 41:10

"...forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14

Courage and grit are important traits that help us all to overcome obstacles and achieve success. Without the fear of correction by the teacher, the child has the courage to attempt new work, and even if he or she struggles a little, they have the opportunity to attempt the work again, which strengthens grit and a true sense of accomplishment.

Parents and teachers can also help children develop courage, grit, and resilience by helping children value their work efforts more than their results. When an adult notices a child's progress, it is important to highlight the character it took to reach success, and not the success itself. Research has shown that children who are praised for "working hard," are more likely to attempt new challenges than children who are praised for "being smart." Children who work hard know how to persevere through set-backs, while children who depend on "being smart," often set a limit to their abilities, and tend to choose work they know they can complete successfully. Children who work hard develop courage and grit to be risk-takers. Children who base their success on "being smart" limit their options and take fewer risks.

Courage and grit are traits that develop over time. Children need opportunities to practice these traits when they are young and the struggles do not have extreme consequences. We encourage courage and grit in the classroom, but you can do it at home, too. Allow your child to help around the house, and don't hover over them as they do so. Don't focus on the outcome of their efforts, but focus on how hard they try. Encourage your child to work with you as you fix something around the house or follow an elaborate recipe. Don't only choose chores they can do easily, but give them chores that they will struggle with a little. And give them lots of chances to keep on trying. Remind them that Jesus strengthens them to take on new challenges. The path to strong character is not always easy, but definitely rewarding!

Important Upcoming Dates

October 5-9 Fall Break, No School
October 12 Return to School
October 30 Harvest Celebration
November 5 Make-Up Picture Taking
November 6 Staff In-service, No School
November 11 Veteran's Day, No School
November 16 End of First Trimester
November 26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday

Conference Wrap-Up

Thank you for participating in our first Zoom conferences. We received lots of feedback that the conferences went well and that having Zoom available benefitted many parents. Rather than taking time off from work, we noticed many parents zooming from their work locations. The Preschool - 4th Grade will have conferences again in February and we will offer Zoom again.

Harvest Celebration - Friday, October 30th

It is Fall, and returning families will remember our Harvest Festivals from past years. Children and parents alike enjoyed the petting zoo, pony rides, Farmer's Market, and all the individual class activities and crafts. This year, to follow safe practices, we are not able to host a schoolwide celebration. Instead, each class will enjoy its own celebration, with activities and treats. Sorry, we will not have classroom volunteers on the campus either.

- Preschoolers are allowed to wear some sort of farm-type shirt (plaid, flannel, denim, etc.) with school shorts or pants, and school shoes.
- Kindergarteners may wear some sort of farm-type shirt (plaid, flannel, denim, etc.), any type of bottoms, long or short, that they are able to pull up and down on their own, and school shoes.
- Grades 1-4 may wear any farm attire.

We also remind you not to send in any special treat bags, cards or gifts.

CHRISTMAS

With all the safety measures we are following, we have determined that it is best not to have full-scaled live Christmas programs as we have in all our previous years. Instead, each class will enjoy its own simplified presentation of our traditional Advent Christmas program sometime during the week after Thanksgiving **without an audience**. We will be giving you the date of your class's special day later next month. Please stay tuned for more information regarding our plans. For now, we want to give you a heads-up about presentation attire. Children in Preschool and Kindergarten will not need any special outfits, and will wear their school uniforms. We are asking that students in Grades 1-4 wear aloha attire. Another difficult change is that teachers will not pass out Christmas cards from the children to their classmates. To maintain our safety and health protocols, we believe it is best to limit items coming from outside. Teachers will create opportunities for students to experience sharing within their classrooms.

Tuition and Financial Aid Questions

If you have any questions regarding tuition or external financial aid please contact us at the office or at: business@childrenshousehawaii.org.

Lastly... Enjoy your Fall Break!

We have been blessed to be able to meet in person since the beginning of the school year! It has been such a joy to see the children playing with their friends again, engaging in class discussions, and moving forward in new ways of learning. There has been a sense of peace and calm throughout the campus, and we are grateful to Jesus for His care for us. We thank you, too, for your diligence in following school and state protocols, which has helped keep us safe here at school and at home. We are all excited to enjoy the well-deserved Fall Break! While we are glad that the new re-opening guidelines came just in time to enjoy the Fall Break, we pray and wish you continued wisdom, carefulness, and safety so that we can return and resume school the way we started!

