

Warm Greetings in This Chilly Weather!

We are happy to welcome Miss Rinya to our toddler team! Fun fact about our newest guide: she was a student at a Montessori School in Chicago from primary school through 4th grade!

Catherine McTamaney is here again, this time to help us differentiate between fantasy and imagination. Contrary to current marketing trends, young children under the age of six are not yet developmentally ready for characters they do not encounter in everyday life.

"Fantasy characters are not only unnecessary; they can also be quite damaging. Because children believe what they are told, and because they lack the experience to fit new information within accurate beliefs about how the world works, they will accept our fantastic explanations with as much legitimacy as if we offered realistic ones."

You might be wondering, does that mean pretend play is discouraged as well? Not so. :)

"In their pretend play, children are trying out new roles, experimenting in a safe environment with new experiences and building their social repertoire. Many of the Practical Life materials take advantage of this natural inclination in children, by offering the same types of skills that they would otherwise simply pretend and allowing children to develop them with real tools. But this natural inclination to pretend should not be confused for a desire for fantasy. Children want to know what the world is really like and they use pretending to experiment within that world."

What is the difference between the fantasy and imagination?

"Fantasy offers children **impossible scenarios** that can never come true and contradicts the child's developing understanding of how the world works. Imagination is just the opposite. Imagination draws on the **child's understanding of the world** and tends that toward **deeper reasoning**. The Montessori classroom is filled with opportunities for imagination. Consider the beautiful pictures of children around the world in the Cultural materials, or the globes symbolizing the continents of the earth. These imaginative opportunities to see similarities and relationships in the environment around them offer children a detailed understanding of how the world works and of their unique role within it."

Full Article: <https://www.montessoridaoshi.com/single-post/2017/10/25/Fantasy-and-Imagination>

"When we are young, we do not need fairytales. Mere life is interesting enough. **A child of seven is excited by being told that Tommy opened a door and saw a dragon, while a child of three is excited by being told that Tommy opened a door!** Boys [and girls] like romantic tales, but babies like realistic tales because they find them romantic."

-G.K. Chesterton (as found in Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work by E.M. Standing)

Finally, here is a BONUS Janet Lansbury podcast and article, intended especially for those families in our community expecting new additions in the near future:

1. <https://www.janetlansbury.com/2018/12/how-and-when-to-prepare-your-child-for-a-new-sibling-or-any-big-transition/>
2. <https://www.janetlansbury.com/2015/03/navigating-the-new-sibling-with-confidence-and-love/>

Best,
Heather, Kathy, Kasey, and Rinya