

F.A.Q.'s

Q: What are the specific needs this program will address?

A: This program addresses key areas that cause anxiety when entering adulthood:

- i) proper care of the self & others
- ii) How to look for a job, prepare a resume, have a successful job interview, and overcome first-day jitters
- iii) Learning how to prepare a business plan for self-employment opportunities

Q: How does the community benefit?

A: The community will benefit from the works of these students. This is in addition to getting to know these wonderful students and helping prepare them to become positive contributing members of the community.

Q: How will participants directly benefit?

A: direct benefits will be:

- i) support and guidance to overcome fears and anxieties of this transitional period
- ii) building and perfecting skills that the youth may need assistance with
- iii) make direct connections with members of the community and work force

Q: What are the potential impacts/learning outcomes for participants?

A: Participants will explore career interests and learn how to plan and achieve these goals to become self-sufficient.

Q: Does this program cost anything?

A: This is a free program dependent on the needs and volunteers of the community, however, there will be a need for your child to have access to money for opening up a bank account, budgeting, and shopping.

Q: Does my child need to be neuro-divergent to participate?

A: This program is open to any Erdkinder student who would like to participate.

How to Register

1. Go to www.ftc2rtc.com
2. Click on "Succeeding to Fly"
3. Click on "Information Session"
4. Choose a date and time
5. Attend the live session
6. Registration packages will be available after the information session.

We Need Parent Volunteers!

Would you like to assist today's youth to succeed in life? Do you believe neuro-divergent learners have much to contribute to our communities? Do you believe with the right guidance anyone can be successful? If so, we are in need of volunteers who can:

- ◆ Provide one-day internships
- ◆ Provide job-interview practice to at least three students
- ◆ Can offer their home for cleaning and yard work

To volunteer, go to www.ftc2rtc.com, click on "Succeeding to Fly", then "volunteer". Enter your information and how you would like to volunteer for this project.



Follow the Child to Reach the Child

Bridging Montessori Pedagogy with Inclusive Practices in Education

Website: www.ftc2rtc.com

Email: ftc2rtc@gmail.com



Follow the Child to Reach the Child

Bridging Montessori Pedagogy with Inclusive Practices in Education

Freedom

to

Fly



A program for adolescents who are at risk for "Failure to Launch" syndrome.

"Failure to Launch may be a new syndrome, but it does not need to be the new norm." ~ J. Turner



Our mission is to empower neuro-diverse adolescents to successfully bridge into adulthood by providing safe, real-world experiences that boost confidence, inspire motivation, and dissolve anxieties.



Our vision is to eliminate “Failure to Launch” syndrome by normalizing the teaching of needed skills to create young adults who are confident and passionate about their future and the world.



“Failure to Launch” syndrome in our Community

We want our children to grow up and experience joyful living, job satisfaction, and the pride and security that results from strong independence skills. Unfortunately, the increase of neuro-diversity has also seen an increase of Failure to Launch syndrome in our community.

“Failure to launch syndrome, while not an official mental health diagnosis, is a phenomenon that refers to those young adults who remain dependent on their parents rather than establishing a separate and independent life as self-sufficient adults” (Peterson, 2023, para. 1).

“Failure to Launch” Red Flags

According to Scala (2023) & Yadav (2023):

- ◆ Lack of good work ethic (school or job)
- ◆ Avoids responsibilities & life challenges
- ◆ Lacks passion for the future
- ◆ Expects problems to solve themselves or for others to solve them
- ◆ Unable to handle stress
- ◆ Lack of self-care & independence skills
- ◆ Depression and/or substance abuse

Citations

Peterson, T.J. (2023, October 20). Failure to launch syndrome: Causes, therapy options, & 7 ways to cope. Choosing Therapy. <https://www.choosingtherapy.com/failure-to-launch-syndrome/>

Scala, V. (2023, December 27). How to help your child overcome “Failure to Launch Syndrome” and ignite their future with therapy. Anchor Therapy. <https://www.anchortherapy.org/blog/how-to-help-your-child-overcome-failure-to-launch-syndrome-and-ignite-their-future-with-therapy>

Yadav, A. (2023, December 30). *Young Adult Failure to Launch Syndrome*. Your Guide to Mental and Emotional Well-Being. <https://www.calmsage.com/failure-to-launch-syndrome/>

“Succeeding to Fly” Program

This is a new program that is being offered in our Erdkinder program in partnership with *Follow the Child to Reach the Child*.

It is a two-day per week program that will immerse your child with skills to recognize and overcome the most common fears that affect today’s young adults. This program will run for four weeks during class time.

Participants will learn and practice the skills that cause the most stress and anxiety for adolescents as they prepare to enter adulthood.

Schedule

Week 1: Self Care Skills

- ◆ Shopping for self-care items
- ◆ Instructions on proper hygiene techniques
- ◆ Proper nutrition needs and grocery shopping
- ◆ Opening a bank account and budgeting skills

Week 2: Community Care Skills

- ◆ Grocery shopping for the elderly
- ◆ Housekeeping for our single parent community
- ◆ Yard work for families with disabilities
- ◆ Caring for children in daycare settings

Week 3: Resume Building & Interview Skills

- ◆ How to build a resume and cover letter
- ◆ Discovering job options and interests
- ◆ Learn about and practice interview skills
- ◆ Set-up and execute 3 job interviews (from a selection made by professional parent volunteers)

Week 4: On the Job Skills

- ◆ Overcoming first-day-on-the-job jitters
- ◆ Internship skills
- ◆ Developing a entrepreneurial business plan
- ◆ Presentation of business plan

Succeeding to Fly



A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

A Holistic Approach to Independent Adulting!

Many children in today’s society feel pressured and anxious about becoming an adult. Crossing the bridge from dependence and security to independence and insecurity can be overwhelming. *Succeeding to Fly* is a program that develops necessary skills and dissolves anxieties to avoid Failure to Launch syndrome. Our holistic approach embraces the four types of mental development most active in adolescents: *social, ethical, cognitive, and emotional*.

Social

One of the core social objectives in the Erdkinder program is “understanding the significance of interdependency and, therefore, the need to cooperate with adults and peers in relation to the rest of the world” (*Overview: Learning Programme from 12 to 18*, n.d., para. 21).

Many adolescents find socializing online to be a less stressful means of interacting with others. This may prevent deep relationships from forming since physical interactions and the understanding of subtle physical communication such as facial expressions, and other body language are not present (knbss-sharer, 2023).

In our program, the participants will be taught social skills such as: team work, communication skills, and peer interaction skills.

Week 1: communication skills with salespeople, (how to ask for assistance, how to pay for items, and how to return items); build teamworking skills (working with peers to plan out routes to local shops); peer interaction skills (learning self-care skills to increase confidence when socializing, such as brushing teeth, using deodorant, etc).

Week 2: conversation skill development by meeting and getting to know an elder in our community. The adolescent will be taught how to actively listen to the needs of others, create a shopping list, and plan the best shops to purchase the items from.

Week 3: the adolescent will learn to effectively communicate during a job interview and how to dress and conduct oneself in the workplace.

Week 4: peer-to-peer interaction within the workplace, such as, how to introduce yourself, how to make small-talk, how to ask for help or clarification when needed, and how to contribute as part of a team.

Ethical

Exploring, developing, and refining a set of ethics is key part of your adolescent’s development and this is necessary for a successful transition into adulthood. “Through experience of different social roles, adolescents learn to understand the difference between right and wrong actions in relation to work, study, the environment and social responsibility. They also become aware that through their own effort, they can make a difference in the world” (*Overview: Learning Programme from 12 to 18*, n.d., para. 23).

In our program, the participants will be engaged with discussions on ethics in society and the workplace, and will self-reflect on their own ethics, questions those of role-models, and practice the ethics they decide are most important in the community.

Week 1: understanding how food effects our bodies; learning about locally sourced foods, organic foods, and ethically sourced food trends, and deciding the value of these food trends. The participants will also explore brand marketing and learn how to avoid being manipulated by advertisements of unhealthy products.

Week 2: explore different childcare trends and their founders; discuss and debate the best trends to encourage the best emotional outcome for children; increase moral reasoning skills by comparing and contrasting the latest childcare trends with the ones popular during the adolescent’s childhood.

Week 3: examination of personal ethics and research on companies that share similar views; develop questions to explore your knowledge on companies ethical beliefs during the job interview process.

Week 4: research the needs of the community and choose ones that align with your personal ethics; discuss how to create a business that will serve the needs of your community and showcase your ethics.





Cognitive

“Montessori believed that adolescents could not study with concentration because they had more important priorities in their lives. That does not mean that their intellectual ability has decreased....Now the adolescent is able to think in new ways which allow her to explore her ideas in depth” (Walls, 2008, p. 19).

In our program, the adolescent will exercise these new thinking skills and continue to learn about necessary academics. For the adolescent, this stage of development “not only involves study of discipline knowledge, but also ways to apply this knowledge. In this way, students have the opportunity to expand understanding and skill, both through practical problem solving and intellectual reasoning” (knbss-sharer, 2023, para. 26).

Week 1: learning the differences between a debit card and a credit card; researching best practices for responsible ownership of a credit card; create a monthly budget covering rent, food, entertainment, and other amenities; analyze the wage necessary to live independently in the community.

Week 2: learning how to maintain a house and develop efficient techniques to do so; research WHMIS protocols and safe chemical dilutions and combinations; provide the homeowner with a cleaning/maintenance schedule to help with efficient and effective housekeeping.

Week 3: learn to write a strategic cover letter and resume that highlights you and your strengths; research and plan three creative ways to get your resume noticed and implement one of them.

Week 4: prepare three 5-10 minute presentations on your proposed business plan that will:

- i) influence banks to invest in your business
- ii) excite members of the community to become your employees
- iii) motivate the community to be long-term customers.

“Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information.” ~ Paulo Freire



Emotional

According to Kahn, one of the main emotional goals of the adolescent is to achieve “inner harmony and happiness due to personal contribution, love of work, love of study and achievement, and a personal participation in the work of society” (Kahn, 2020, p. 146).

The positive emotional experiences the adolescent acquires from our program will help with the self-realization that there is a need for their unique abilities in our community and world. The adolescent will acknowledge his value and begin to look forward to changing the world and entering adulthood.

Week 1: identify self-care skills you know well and help peers who don't to learn them; identify self-care skills you don't know well and overcome fears of asking for guidance by communicating your needs with your peer-group; experience how good hygiene and self-care affects your mental and emotional wellbeing.

Week 2: manage anxiety with physical work in the outdoors while helping members of your community maintain their property; learn how to handle overwhelming activities by chunking them down and effectively organizing your time (ex. chunk “gardening” into weeding, mowing, raking, and removing yard waste); empathise with community members with physical diversities and ease their stress with community works.

Week 3: learn strategies that will motivate you to look for meaningful job opportunities you dream of (exploring personal interests, exploring personal ethics, researching companies that share these interests and ethics); learn strategies for dealing with disappointment if your application has been rejected (journaling, positive self-talk; discover lessons learned from the experience and apply these lessons for future interviews); learn interview strategies that will keep you motivated to find employment and enter every job interview with confidence (how to give a handshake; how to dress for an interview; how to converse with a potential employer; how to sell yourself at a job interview).

Week 4: confront your worst-case scenario for your first day at work through role-play and brainstorm with peers how to overcome and minimize this fear; choose a mantra to help you manage first-day, on-the-job, anxieties; practice turning debilitating negative thoughts into empowering positive thoughts.

“It isn't stress that makes us fall--it's how we respond to stressful events.” ~ Wayne Goodall



Citations

Kahn, D. (2020). Montessori adolescent construction for the future. *AMI Journal 2020*. 142-146. Retrieved March 30, 2024, from <https://montessori-ami.org/sites/default/files/downloads/AMIJournal2020.pdf>

knbs-sharer. (2023, May 9). *Online vs. In-Person Socializing: Pros and Cons*. (2023, May 9). Knowledge and Science Bulletin Board System. <https://www.knbs.com/online-vs-in-person-socializing-pros-and-cons/>

Overview: learning programme from 12 to 18. (n.d.). Montessori National Curriculum Online | Montessori Australia. Retrieved March 30, 2024, from <https://www.montessoricurriculum.org.au/overview-learning-programme-from-12-18/>

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Freedom to Fly



A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

Self Care and Care of Community

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*Who am I? What are my needs? How can I take control of my own self-care?*

*Who is my community? What are their needs? How can I help care for my community?*

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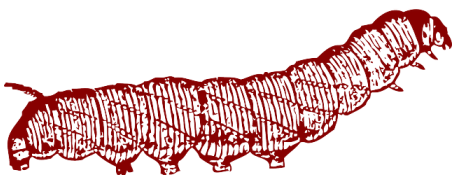
Responsibility, Independence, & Real-world Experiences

The FtoF program teaches adolescents self-care skills they may be too ashamed to ask for help with. Everything from learning how to shower and wash their hair, dental care, how to shave, use deodorant, style hair, use makeup, and put together outfits will be explored. The goals are to create self-awareness, a proud sense of self, and heightened self-esteem within social environments through real-world experiences.

Shopping can be a stressful social exercise many young adults avoid because “going shopping is full of unpredictability, sensory overload, and interactions with strangers” (Fletcher, 2022, para. 5). Fears of being judged for making wrong purchases, not having budgeted correctly for items, and the pressure of needing to ask for assistance from salespeople, can combine into an overwhelming, yet avoidable, mental health crisis. Students will learn how to open and use a bank account, budget for needs, navigate shopping centres to locate items they need, ask for assistance, and be secure that they remain on budget. The goals are to increase confidence, independence, and responsibility with caring for oneself.

Once there is confidence and accomplishment with shopping for oneself, using these skills to help others in the community is explored. The FtoF program partners with local retirement centres and volunteers who welcome the students to work with our senior community. Students will learn about nutritional needs and help those on fixed incomes budget a weekly shopping list. The goals are for students to use their new shopping skills to help the senior community by providing service, nutrition, and companionship.

Contemporary man, the victim of his time, must become the master of his era. If men were prepared for their conditions of life, they would be in a position to control events rather than becoming the helpless victims of them, and they would be well on the way to social health rather than being overwhelmed by a continuous series of crises and afflictions. (Montessori, 1997, p. 64).



Support of Cognitive, Social, Emotional or Physical Development

The Self Care and Community Care portion of our program exercises the adolescent's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Cognitive: strategic and logical thinking skills are increased along with problem solving skills for learning about proper hygiene techniques, how to budget money, and how to navigate and travel to shopping centres. Practical life skills have a direct impact on cognitive skills because the adolescent is "integrating them in a way that allows for effectively managing one's daily affairs and meeting personal and social responsibilities. Cognitive and practical competencies are key to enhancing individual and community well-being and to living a life of purpose" (*Cognitive and Practical Skills: Student Affairs Assessment & Planning - Northwestern University*, n.d., para. 1).

Social: social skills increase by encouraging discussions with senior residents and sales associates. As self-confidence rises, fears of socializing with others begin to subside. The adolescents learn there is no shame in not knowing all of the answers, and they learn how to find the answers they seek through socialization.

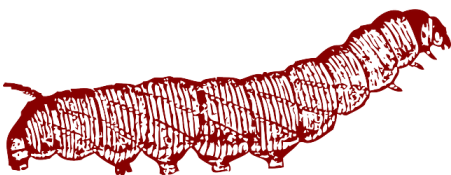
Emotional: lack of self-esteem and confidence is major factor in Failure to Launch syndrome. "Young adults who struggle to transition into independent adult life may experience low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. They may also face financial struggles and cannot independently achieve attainable goals and aspirations" (Capanna-Hodge, 2023, para. 7). By practicing these cognitive and social skills, adolescents will increase their emotional development which will encourage further skill development of their cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Additionally, community services, such as shopping for senior citizens, will enhance empathy and showcase their strengths and abilities. Adolescents will see how they are capable of positively impacting the lives of others within their community.

Physical: exercise is another fundamental aspect of good health. By helping community members maintain their homes and properties, your adolescent will be experiencing the therapeutic nature of physical work. "Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on depression, anxiety, and ADHD. It also relieves stress, improves memory, helps you sleep better, and boosts your overall mood" (Robinson et al., 2023, para. 3). Taking care of homes and properties not only teaches one how to maintain their own home, but how to manage their stress levels with physical activity.

Fosters Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, or Collaboration Among Peers

The Self Care and Community Care portion of our program increases critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and collaboration among peers.

Critical Thinking: "Critical thinking is the ability to interpret, evaluate, and analyze facts and information that are available, to form a judgment or decide if something is right or wrong" (coursera, 2023, para. 4). Deciding what to wear for school, a date, a formal event, or a night out with friends may cause stress and anxiety if critical thinking skills are not strong. By learning about and practicing self-care techniques, the adolescents will learn many dos and don'ts of social norms and expectations in our communities. Learning about nutrition will also help critical thinking skills when shopping for food for oneself or for others, especially when working on a budget.



Problem Solving Skills: it can be daunting when faced with the problem of how to get to and from the shopping centres in the community. Instead of avoiding these problems, we teach the adolescent how to recognize the problem (how to get to the store), think of realistic options (use a taxi, find the bus route, ride a bicycle), and decide on the one that makes the most logical sense (the bus is more affordable than a taxi and I can carry more groceries on a bus than on a bicycle).

Collaboration Among Peers: the adolescents are encouraged to help one another with problem-solving skills. A student may decide it is best to take a bus to the shopping centre, but may not have the confidence and know-how to do so. By collaborating with peers, students who have experience can help teach their peer about bus routes, how to purchase a ticket, and how to engage with people on the bus. Peers can even accompany each other when using public transportation for the first time as support.

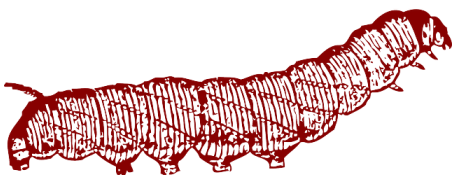
Potential Challenges

Expected challenges for this portion of the program are social-based. We expect students to be hesitant and uncomfortable with confronting their social anxieties and embracing their independence. This, however, is the key to overcoming these difficulties. Anxieties and fears are going to be confronted, but the goal is not to increase them. We recognize the instinct to avoid these negative feelings will be strong, but this instinct will also prevent your adolescent from independence. Students will be encouraged to address these fears independently, but with complete support and guidance from their teachers and peers.

When dealing with anxiety, most of us have the human instinct to flee from and avoid it. The problem is that when you flee from anxiety, you actually feed the Anxiety Beast. Running from your anxiety gives you temporary relief, but increases your long-term anxiety. You have fed the Anxiety Beast, so it will grow, have more power over you and make you more anxious the next time you have to deal with it. (Lance, 2020, para. 12).

Solutions

We will work together to help recognize, confront, and overcome the anxieties that are preventing your adolescent from their independence. Through role-playing and real-life experiences we will practice skills and techniques to keep calm and rational, while preventing to feed the “anxiety beast”. One on one coaching will be provided on an as-needed basis. Each student will have access to our guides and teachers to discuss any anxieties that develop. Support can be as simple as a pep-talk, or as hands-on as having a guide help plan a bus route and accompany the student for the entire trip. Being true to the Montessori philosophy, we will always encourage as much independence as possible, but we will also be aware of what is needed to build independence: developing life skills, time-management skills, building a trusted support network, self-care, and allowing yourself to make mistakes and learn from them (OPI Team, 2018). These skills take time to develop and anxiety can prevent this from occurring. Balancing support, guidance, and independence, we will be sure to provide your adolescent with the care and confidence needed to embrace adulthood.



Discovery of Interests & Development of Working Skills

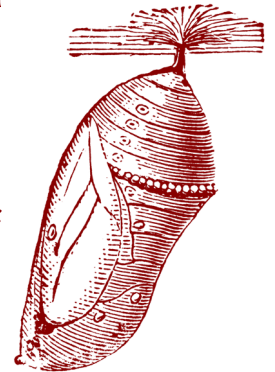
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*What are my interests? What are dreams? What am I excited about for my future?*

*What fears and anxieties do I have about my future? How can I overcome them?*  
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Responsibility, Independence, & Real-world Experiences

Being confident with self-care and community-care skills, it is time to move on to Discovery of Interests and Development of Working Skills! This next section is an introspective program that validates your adolescent's interests and prepares them for finding and maintaining a job.

It can be difficult to look for employment, attend job interviews and show up for the first day on the job! These are skills every person needs to conquer to become independent. By going through these steps together, your adolescent will be able to see how they do not need to be intimidated, increasing their independence skills. Securing and attending job interviews, as well as, completing a first-day-on-the-job scenario, the adolescent will build confidence and responsibility skills through our real-world scenarios. Not only will the adolescent attend 3 job interviews, but will learn how to handle rejection from one interview and how to choose between two successful interviews. The adolescent will also have the experience of attending the workplace for one day to experience the realities of the workforce and to continue practicing social and personal-care skills.



Support of Cognitive, Social, Emotional or Physical Development

Cognitive: is it better to work for more money at a job that is boring, or to work for less money at a job that inspires you? Is it better to find full-time employment as soon as possible, or to seek a post-secondary education? Is it better to align your beliefs, values, and interests with an employer's, or to accept any offer of employment regardless of their ethics? These are questions we need to think about when dealing with our adult future in the workforce. There are no right or wrong answers, but they need to be explored so the individual is aware of and content with the decisions he makes. Your adolescent will be asking these questions of themselves and learning how to respectfully question potential employers.

Social: through discussions and group mentoring, the students will be helping themselves gain social skills by helping their peers prepare resumes and cover letters, prepare for job interviews, and reflect and learn from rejection letters together.

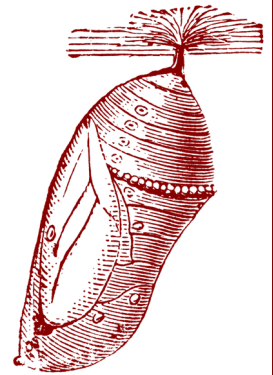
Emotional: learning how to conduct oneself with confidence and grace is not easy, especially when compounded with the anxiety caused by a job interview. Working with guides, teachers and peers, the adolescent will practice the most common questions asked during interviews. This will set the adolescent up with confidence for attending interviews in the future. Additionally, we believe it is essential that every adolescent learn how to handle rejection. In the FtoF program, every student will be made aware they will receive one rejection letter. We will have a discussion group when the rejection letters are handed out. Learning how to accept rejection and learn from it is, what we believe, to be the most important skill and adolescent can develop to help with adulthood. Experiencing this with peers shows how everyone experiences rejection and allows for empathy and compassion to be practiced, and also allows the adolescent to know it's okay to fail, feel bad about it, and accept empathy and compassion from others.

Physical: depending on your adolescent's interests, a fitness program may be necessary. Many careers encourage good physical fitness, and if this is part of your adolescent's interests, we will be looking at ways to start or maintain fitness goals. Cardiovascular and muscle building exercises will be considered and evaluated. Using public spaces for jogging, sports, and biking will be discussed as well as the benefits and detriments of joining a gym. Physical fitness is an important part of life-satisfaction and we want your adolescent to have every opportunity to be in control of his own life-satisfaction.

Fosters Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, or Collaboration Among Peers

Critical Thinking: learning about your interests, learning about career choices, learning about educational requirements, and learning about income potentials will all support critical thinking of your adolescent. Weighing what is more important to them will determine the best course of action for happiness and success in the adult world. These may change throughout their lives, but knowing what is important to them and how to weigh them to make important decisions will be a skill they keep forever.

Problem Solving and Collaboration: these skills will be practiced independently and collaboratively with peers. Students are encouraged to talk about problems they are having difficulty overcoming and to help brainstorm with peers on solutions. Something as simple about knowing how much cologne/perfume to use at a job interview, or something more complex like deciding whether to accept a job that pays high wage over a lower-wage job that offers more work satisfaction, will be discussed in our safe and judgment free discussion groups. The adolescent will have the chance to express their gut feeling, listen to the opinion of others, then use this advice (or not) to make their final decisions.



Potential Challenges

Potential challenges for this section of the program may be economic in nature. Attending job interviews can be costly, and we will be expecting the students to groom themselves and dress appropriately. There is also transportation to consider and meals when travelling for interviews or working on the job. We understand the economic pressures being faced by everyone today and do not wish this to put extra stress upon our families.

Solutions

In the first portion of the program, the adolescents will be opening up their own bank account and will be responsible for maintaining it with newly acquired budgeting skills. We ask that an initial investment from each family of \$250 be made to your child's account. With this money, your child will be purchasing self-care items, groceries, clothing, travel expenses, and other items such as haircuts or lunches.

It may be tempting to use items at home, but it is imperative that every adolescent learns how to use money, budget with a limited income, and choose their own clothing and accessories when shopping for interviews. If a \$250 is too much for your family to invest, we ask you to invest what you can and we will cover the remaining amount.

What we ask is for you to consider donating money to FtoF when you are economically able to do so. Donations ensure continued support to other families in the future. We do not want anyone to miss this program due to financial pressures.

For those who are able, please consider donating to FtoF, at any time, on our website, www.ftc2rtc.com.

My Unique Path



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*What are my core beliefs? How can I change the world?*  
*What options are open to me? Where do I start?*  
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Responsibility, Independence, & Real-world Experiences

In the final section of the FtoF program, students will develop more awareness of how to bring their own interests and passions into the workforce by creating a business plan to explore entrepreneurship. Your adolescent will learn about the responsibilities of the employer regarding human rights, the employment standards act, health and safety legislations, and best employment practices.

Your adolescent will take part in studying the needs of the community and discovering how their passions align with these needs. Weighing economic and job satisfaction with the desire to contribute to one's community, your adolescent will know they have the power to positively impact and change the world.

Your child's goal will be to develop a business plan based on their independent thoughts, observations, decisions and experiences. As always, guidance, support, and counsel with guides, teachers and peers will be available at all times.

By learning how to create a business plan, your adolescent will become empowered with the knowledge of the steps required to become an entrepreneur. Your adolescent may be inspired to pursue their dreams with confidence after this real-world experience!

Support of Cognitive, Social, Emotional or Physical Development

Cognitive: cognitive skills will continued to be developed as your adolescent develops a sustainable business plan benefiting the community while fulfilling their interests and satisfying their ethics. Learning about business laws and government mandates will challenge your adolescent to create a realistic and practical business plan that also embraces the rights of the workers.

Social: your adolescent will be spending time with community members to hear about the most pressing needs. Communication with peers and community idols will demand social conversations and interactions which may normally be avoided by your adolescent. Learning how to create and perform persuasive arguments for banks, investors, and the community will heighten your adolescent's social and communication skills.

Emotional: at this point, your adolescent will step back and look at all they have accomplished thus far. They have overcome many fears and are now embarking on a project that once would have seemed intimidating! We will be reflecting on all of the accomplishments enhanced by past mistakes which will further empower self-confidence. Emotionally, your adolescent will be confident and proud of their accomplishments, and ready to face this new challenge armed with the experience of past failures and accomplishments, risks and strategic planning.

My Unique Path



~~~~~  
*What are my core beliefs? How can I change the world?*  
*What options are open to me? Where do I start?*  
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Fosters Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, or Collaboration Among Peers

Critical Thinking: creating a business is a very intimidating process. However, entrepreneurship is on the rise in Canada. According to Bush (2024), “small businesses made up 98% of all the employer businesses in Canada in 2022...which is about 63% of the total workforce” (para. 5). With the FtoF program, your adolescent will learn how to research data, analyze data, weigh opinions with facts, and instincts with traditional practices. Having a strong passion and belief is needed to start a business, but understanding the laws, restrictions, and financial realities is needed to run a successful business. Critical thinking will be supported and refined at this level.

Problem Solving & Collaboration: many problems will arise when focusing on building a business plan. Learning how to handle and solve these problems will be the main focus of learning here. Students can continue to rely on guides, teachers and peers to help with problem solving, but are encouraged to use the independent problem solving skills they have developed first. Common problems will revolve around making the business economically viable enough to convince investors and banks to support and help fund the business plan. Not all problems will be solved, but learning how to solve these problems will be highlighted and practiced.

Potential Challenges

The most common challenge at this stage is overcoming the fear of public speaking. This is a fear that many people experience and avoid as much as possible! Having to create and give 3 short presentations gives the adolescent opportunity to practice public speaking in a safe and supportive environment. However, we realize this may still cause much stress and anxiety.

Solutions

Students are welcome to utilize technology to record themselves giving their presentation on video and then presenting it to the group. PowerPoint presentations, written essay-style presentations, and script presentations (a script is written and peers volunteer to act it out) are also welcome. Any presentation strategy that will pass on the intended information will be accepted and creativity is encouraged!



Follow the Child to Reach the Child

Bridging Montessori Pedagogy with Inclusive Practices in Education

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Freedom to Fly



A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

Inclusivity in our Program

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*Who am I? What are my values? How can I contribute?*

*Who is my community? What are their realities? How can I learn from them?*

~~~~~

Inclusivity Statement:

The FtoF program is open to everyone in the Erdkinder class. We do not discriminate based on age, race, religion, spiritual beliefs, physical disabilities, learning differences, socio-economic status, gender or sexual identity, or any other factor that makes us unique and valued members of society.

Our Approach:

We are Welcoming

Each cohort is specifically tailored based on the needs of the participants. Students who have autism, ADHD, LDs, physical disabilities, or other diagnoses are encouraged to join this program both to learn living skills, social skills, and real-world skills, along with teaching their peers about their personal strengths and struggles.

Students who identify as a POC, ESL learners, and/or the 2SLGBTQI+ communities are encouraged to join this program both to learn living skills, social skills, and real-world skills, along with teaching their peers about their personal strengths and struggles.

The FtoF program is donation-based and does not require a financial commitment. FtoF will provide \$250 per child for budgeting and personal-shopping skill development. FtoF is donation based and we ask every family to consider donating if you are satisfied with the quality of our program and the experiences your child has been given. Donations can be made at www.ftc2rtc.com.

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*The adolescent must never be treated as a child, for that is a stage of life that he has surpassed.  
It is better to treat an adolescent as if he had greater value than he actually shows than as if  
he had less and let him feel that his merits and self-respect are disregarded.*

(Montessori, 1976, p. 113)

# Inclusivity in our Program

## We are Peer-based

All participants will be working towards individual goals and skill acquisition, but will do so in a safe and supportive peer environment. We will celebrate accomplishments and help solve problems faced by our peers. Respecting each other's backgrounds and abilities, the peers support one another and encourage success!

Learners will participate in group discussions and brain-storming sessions, work with partners and small groups to overcome challenges, and assist peers who need extra guidance or support. A participant who is strong with computer skills may be helping another who is not; this same participant may be receiving help of another peer who has more experience with navigating public transportation.

## We are Community-based

We live in a diverse world, but we are focused on the specific diversities in our own community. Participants will interact with community service providers, business owners, elderly members of our community, and members of our community with special needs. Participants will interact with senior citizens and provide a food service for them. Participants will also assist with young children with special needs and their families. Other community services are: house cleaning and property maintenance for community members with diversities.

We encourage the parents of our participants to volunteer their time to work with the participants. Opportunities to open your home to a participant to learn cleaning skills, or outdoor maintenance skills is needed! Opportunities to help guide participants with job interview skills and on-the-job skills are needed! Opportunities to educate participants of your family's unique background and/or culture is needed! Please sign up to be a volunteer on our website, [www.ftc2rtc.com](http://www.ftc2rtc.com).

## We are Flexible

Everyone has their own learning styles and this is represented in the FtoF program! Some learners prefer independent research while others excel in group-based experiences. Some learners prefer auditory instructions while others prefer reading. Some learners enjoy the creativity of writing while others enjoy the creativity of creating a film. Some learners thrive in front of an audience while others bloom with sharing recorded presentations. Whatever your learning style and/or needs are, we are able to accommodate you!

When creating a business plan, participants can type, utilize speech-to-text technologies, or create an oral presentation. Assignments may be presented as slideshows, brochures, videos, speeches, or animations. If you have a special request or need in order to enhance your learning experience, let us know and we will provide it for you.

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This specific curriculum component, explored in early childhood, elementary, and secondary Montessori classrooms at ever-increasing levels of complexity, is not only content-appropriate for children of any culture or faith (free of ideological bias) but also promotes intercultural sensitivity and empathy at a very young age, foundational for the development of attitudes of global citizenship.

(Brunold-Conesa, 2019, para. 7)

Inclusivity in our Program

We are Aware

The FtoF program is intended to prepare adolescents for adulthood. This means there will be uncomfortable situations that may create anxiety and discomfort. We know that adolescence is a time when self-esteem may be low and social anxieties may be high, but we also know pushing through anxieties and fears will help to dissolve them while avoiding them will cause the anxiety-avoidance cycle.

The anxiety-avoidance cycle occurs when a situation triggers *anxiety* within a person. This anxiety causes the person to *avoid* the situation. This avoidance creates *relief* from the stress and anxiety, but *reinforces* the thought that the person should not confront the stressful situation. This worsens over time and small anxieties can increase. (Lockett, 2023).

If a participant is finding it difficult to manage anxieties, there will be peer-counselling and one-on-one counselling with our guides if needed. That first step out of your comfort zone may be difficult, but the second and third will be easier. With the support of peers and our guides, the participant will come to believe that, "I can do it"!

We are Resourceful

This is a hands-on approach to learning, which means all of the assignments will be practiced and worked on during class time. Every student will have access to computers, the internet, speech-to-text technology, text-to-speech technology, finances, transportation and mentored guidance. If a participant finds the noise of the classroom is a distraction, we can provide noise-cancelling headphones to help with focus. If a participant prefers written instructions to be in their home-language, we will provide translations. If a participants need extra help with anxiety, we can provide counselling and relaxation/grounding exercises to practice. If a participant is in need of any resource that we do not already have, please let us know and we will work to provide this for the learner.

Proactive Strategies:

Communication

Communication is key to successful living! Learning how to express oneself and to become an active listener are skills that are needed to successfully interact with and contribute to our communities. Based on the skill-level and ability of each participant, communication may look different.

Our guides are able to

- communicate in ASL, French, Hindi, Urdu, Spanish, and more
- Support ESL learners with English
- Improve keyboarding skills for learners who prefer technology
- Communicate with participants through email or one-on-one conferences

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*An inclusive school needs to be flexible and ever-changing with the needs of the families it serves. I would caution any school considering creating an inclusive program without partnering with the families involved to reconsider. To exclude the families of the children we are serving will only weaken the foundation of our inclusive endeavors in Montessori education.*

(Turner, 2023, para. 22)



# Inclusivity in our Program

## Socio-economics

Everybody has a different socio-economic background that fluctuates due to the economy, employment status, and personal circumstances. FtoF operates as a free service to all participants. We rely on the donations of our communities to help every participant towards complete independence. There are no fees to sign up and no tuition for the program.

FtoF will provide \$250 per participant to budget and use for assignments. Parents are welcome to donate some, all, or more than this amount to FtoF at any time, if they so choose. Donations may be made at [www.ftc2rtc.com](http://www.ftc2rtc.com).

## Organization, Planning, and Scheduling

Being an adult isn't all about staying up late and eating ice cream for dinner! Organizing, planning, and scheduling work assignments, family events, and even vacations are necessary skills to have. Throughout the FtoF program, participants will be mentored to organize their tasks, plan for their assignments, and ensure everything is scheduled on time. Using paper organizers, electronic organizers, phone alarms, and other tools and techniques, participants will learn how to choose their goals and organize the steps required within a reasonable timeline to advance towards their goals.

## Participation

The FtoF program encourages participation from all adolescent learners. Using a peer-based support system, our learners begin to understand the diversity of their peer group, practice empathy, and support each other using their own personal strengths. By discussing the assignments, and the hopes and fears they create, each participant will see they share similar fears and will help each solve problems and support each other when difficulties arise.

Participants will engage in group discussions in person or through video conferencing. Translations will be possible through video conferencing. Participants are encouraged to share their stories and advice with their peers through storytelling or text.

Assignments can be completed independently, with a partner, or a small group. When shopping for the elderly, participants will work individually with their assigned senior community member, but may choose to navigate the public transit system with a small group of their peers for support, assurance, and companionship.

Creativity is encouraged as is the freedom for the participants to express their knowledge freely in a way that is most enjoyable to them. Whether the participant wants to express what has been learned through traditional essay-form or modern cultural musical creations, the freedom to be oneself and will always be encouraged.

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The purpose of social organization in the third plane is a constructive activity that contributes to self-construction. What makes it distinct from adult social organization is that in the third plane social organization is still in a prepared environment.

Adult life is an unprepared environment.

(Hoglund, 2019, para. 15)

Inclusivity in our Program

Social Anxiety & Mental Wellness

Mental wellness has become a common concern for adolescents. Many adolescents are protecting themselves by refusing to interact with society and isolate, preferring social media to social interactions. However, this can cause social anxieties to grow and erode mental wellness. “Social isolation, whether by choice or circumstance, can contribute to increased levels of anxiety and even depression. As human beings, we have an innate need for social connection and belonging, and when that need is not fulfilled, our mental well-being suffers” (Rancourt, 2023, para. 14).

The activities of this program aim to have the participant experience unavoidable stressful situations which are present when transitioning to adulthood, but also increase their self-confidence, self-esteem, and community involvement. FtoF provides participants with mentorship, support, skills and encouragement to meet and overcome these stresses.

To help our participants handle anxieties, we teach many of the grounding techniques compiled by Alicia Nortje, Ph. D., from PositivePsychology.com [10+ Mindful Grounding Techniques \(Incl. Group Exercise\) \(positivepsychology.com\)](https://www.positivepsychology.com/10-mindful-grounding-techniques-incl-group-exercise/).

Cultural Awareness:

Diversity within the Community

Throughout the program there will be an emphasis on diversities within the community. Participants will be expected to interact with community members of diverse cultural backgrounds, diverse learning abilities, and diverse ages and stages of life. Participants will be expected to listen to the representatives of these groups, learn about their needs in the community, and reflect on how they can help support these needs with their personal strengths and abilities.

When caring for property, the participant will learn about the lives of community members who have diversities, or are the primary caregivers for people with diversities. The participant will learn, regardless of their own diversities, they have strengths and values that can positively impact this community member’s life.

Accessible Languages

Our program is primarily available in English, however, we are able to provide instructions and feedback in any preferred language. Live discussions can be attended using translation software or interpreters. ASL trained guides are also available.

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*Students are responsible for their own learning because they will not be independent if adults take responsibility. But we cannot give them that responsibility if we do not offer them many clear and attractive opportunities to learn.*

(Wells, 2008, p. 39)

# Inclusivity in our Program

## Diverse Business Owners

Business owners have a huge impact on our communities. Their businesses provide us with the food, clothing, and entertainment we need, but they also provide employment opportunities and positively contribute to the economy. Learning about the diverse businesses in the community and talking to their owners will help build respectful and meaningful relationships between the adolescent and the business owner.

Being mentored on-the-job by a diverse community member will not only provide the learner with job-skills and experiences, but will create an initial networking structure for the participant in the work environment. Through this process, both business owner and learner get to benefit from the diverse strengths and contributions from each party.

## Recognition of Needs within the Community

At FtoF, we strongly believe that in order to know where you fit in your community, you must recognize and understand the needs of your community. By the end of this program, each participant will have overcome personal hindrances to their social development, improved their self-care and hygiene, focused on acknowledging and using their own strengths and abilities to help others, and understand their community. The participant will reflect upon their own interests, ethics, and abilities when thinking about their future as an adult. With the community open wide to them, each participant will discover who they are, what they can do, where they fit, and how they can contribute.



**Follow the Child to Reach the Child**

Bridging Montessori Pedagogy with Inclusive Practices in Education

# Inclusivity in our Program

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# Freedom to Fly



A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

## Experiential Learning



*Montessori Secondary programs are rooted in hands-on, experiential learning.*

*Your adolescent may have an opportunity to start a business, complete with developing a business plan and securing funding, or work as an apprentice to an expert in a field she loves.*

*(Montessori Secondary Classroom Experience, n.d., para. 8)*



## Benefits and Impact on Adolescent Engagement

Experiential learning was developed by David A. Kolb, and is defined as, “learning by doing” (*What Is Experiential Learning?*, n.d. para. 4). Kolb describes 4 steps in the experiential learning process: experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting (Institute of Experiential Learning, 2024). By using experiential learning as our foundation, the learners in the FtoF program will use these steps to gain confidence through practicing and refining their skills while reflecting upon their interests, their abilities, the needs of the community, and how to positively impact their community.

According to Dr. Capanna-Hodge (2019), failure to launch syndrome is on the rise and many adolescents are at risk. Adolescents with diversities are particularly susceptible to this syndrome, but it can effect anyone. Traditional education does not help prevent Failure to Launch, and may reinforce it. To combat it, adolescents should be exposed to Experiential Learning to help increase their learning, confidence, and prepare them for adulthood. “Outside of academic success in high school and college, experiential learning helps prepare teenagers for adulthood. Experiential learning programs often encourage teenagers to think outside of the box, and to consider their future lives as responsible adults” (Borden, 2014, para. 5).

Many habits of the adolescent may be coping mechanisms to protect them from the stress of social anxieties. Popular coping behaviours can be addiction to technology, substance abuse, and self-isolation. An important factor of experiential learning is that it moves beyond acquisition of facts, and instead becomes lasting behavioural change, the development of skills and behaviours to respond to different situations, and an ability to apply this knowledge. (*What Is Experiential Learning?*, n.d. para. 14). This means, when the adolescent engages in experiential learning, abilities and confidence will increase and destructive self-coping behaviours will not be needed anymore.

# Freedom to Fly



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Since learning is the primary process used to navigate life, people can use this process for all forms of learning, development, and change.

(Institute of Experiential Learning, 2024).
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## Alignment with the FtoF program goals

Learners are able to combat anxieties through, experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting upon:

### 1. Self care and hygiene

- Self-grooming, dressing for work, how to shop
- Engaging with community members and asking for help
- Learning how to use local transit systems

### 2. Community care skills

- Socially connecting with members of the community
- Grocery shopping for the elderly
- House and property maintenance for those with diverse abilities

### 3. Resume building and interview skills

- Reflecting on community needs and personal interests
- Learning to create a cover letter and resume
- Arranging and attending 3 job interviews and learn from feedback

### 4. On the job skills

- Working through first-day anxieties
- Obtaining a career-focused mentor in the community
- Reflecting on personal interests and career opportunities

### 5. Entrepreneurial skills

- Reflecting on personal strengths, interests, and community needs
- Learning how to create a business plan
- Develop presentation skills

Learners will have guidance and support while minimizing anxieties that block development. The learner will “explore new ideas and take risks. It also encourages learners to take a more active role in their learning, which can help to reduce feelings of overwhelm and helplessness” (*Experiential Learning and the Support of Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Classroom – Learning Leap Consultants, n.d. para. 9*).

# Freedom to Fly



A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.



*As educators and learners become more aware of learning anxiety, they can work together to create supportive, inclusive environments that foster a positive attitude toward learning and help alleviate learning anxiety for all individuals.*

(Learning Anxiety: Overcoming Educational Stress, 2023)



## Implementation Strategies

1. FtoF guides connect with each participant and learn about their strengths, areas needing more skill development, their anxieties, and their dreams.
2. FtoF guides encourage group discussions for problem-solving and peer-support in order to create trust within the peer-group and to show they are not alone with their fears.
3. Grounding techniques are taught and practiced to help the participants learn to regulate their feelings and anxieties.
4. One-on-one counselling is provided if needed.
5. Activities begin with self-care skills to underline the importance of the self and to increase self-esteem and a sense of self-worth.
6. Community activities integrate the participant into the lives of others and demands they recognize and use their own strengths to help others.
7. Career-based activities help the participant overcome fears of the finding, getting, and keeping employment and impresses an “I can so I will” attitude.
8. Financial skills are taught via budgeting and banking skills, which support independence.
9. Members of the community will be asked to volunteer to engage with participants to increase social skill and communication skill comfort.
10. Participants will be preparing for each activity at school, with the support of the guide and peers, and will have time to plan, review, and adjust their strategies as needed.

# *Freedom to Fly*



A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

## Expected Challenges & Strategies to Overcome them

1. The feeling of being overwhelmed by confronting social anxieties.
  - learning to take an overwhelming task and chunk it into smaller tasks, that lead, step by step, to the desired goal
  - practicing meditation and grounding techniques to manage stress
  
2. Not wanting to participate due to a fear of embarrassing oneself within the group.
  - participation in group sessions is mandatory, with a minimum participation of listening to the other members. By listening to the fears and advice of others, the participant will see their anxieties are not unique and they are in a supportive and safe environment
  
3. Inability to see one’s skills and strengths due to poor self-esteem.
  - helping community members with diversities will demonstrate how one is able to positively impact the lives of others using skills and strengths that others do not have
  
4. Lack of awareness of one’s personal and career interests.
  - encouragement and support to keep engaging with the community to find joy in helping others and awareness of one’s strengths and interests
  - support to learn of career opportunities and next steps to achieve them, such as post-secondary education options
  
5. Intense fears and anxieties of socially interacting within the community.
  - one-on-one counselling can be provided along with group counselling



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# Freedom to Fly



A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

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As most of us grew up we did not have adequate outlet for our strong creative energy. We did not find a way to see ourselves as an important unit in both our cosmos and our society. Most of us managed to find sufficient support to get some type of framework for ourselves. With the challenges of today young people need a very strong sense of identity. Cosmic education will not provide that by itself, but it is an important tool to help us to guide young people to do this for themselves. (Walls, 2008, p. 53).
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## Welcome to Erdkinder!

We are very excited to have your child join our Erdkinder program! Entering a new classroom with new peers can cause anxiety, but we will help your child transition, not only into a new classroom but into a new stage of development.

The Elementary Montessori program supports the learner’s interest with exploring the world through Cosmic Education. The learner engages with the history of the universe, the Earth, and mankind. Through these lessons the learner connects themselves to the works of all others before them. It is during this plane of development where the learner begins to find their own place in the world, develops personal ethics, and learns to socialize in a collaborative manner with peers.

Moving into the third plane of development, the learner takes everything learned from the second plane and begins to refine these skills. This is a more intimate and personal time for learning as the learner is focused on the self and how they can contribute to the community and world. This transition can be seen when group work becomes solitary work, the assimilation of world cultural knowledge becomes specific for the learner’s own community, and personalized plans to positively impact the community begin to be developed.

To welcome new learners into the Erdkinder program, the class will participate in organizing a weekend camping trip that will take place in the spring. This excursion will be planned and executed by the students; planning will begin on the first day of school!

Knowing you are a valued member of a community is important to feeling comfortable in a new setting. Using the learner’s collaborative group skills, they will be an important part of this trip from the planning stage to the moment they return home.



# Freedom to Fly



A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

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When peer-to-peer learning is self-directed, when it happens because children are ready, willing, and able to participate, it bolsters the older child's self-confidence, opens doors for younger children, and sharpens the academic skills of both. (Multi-Age Grouping: Observation + Imitation = Learning - Ideas & Insights Articles - Montessori Services, n.d., para. 11).
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## Erdkinder Camping Excursion

With the guidance of older classmates, the learner will participate in choosing the camping location, the dates of the trip, organizing the trip, providing the necessary supplies (food, toiletries, etc), and organizing and implementing group activities on the trip.

The learner will have the opportunity to take responsibility for at least one task that will benefit the entire group's camping experience. This will demonstrate how the work of an individual can positively impact the experience of the entire community. For example, one learner may be in charge of washing the breakfast dishes, or ensuring all tents have been erected safely and securely.

Learners will get to know their new classmates through interacting in this collaborative excursion together. Our newest members will learn from the experience and guidance of the older learners who will be group leaders and role models. By contributing what they can with the skills they already have, the newest members of our classroom community will find confidence and self-worth while socializing in a constructive environment.

By participating with this excursion, learners will learn skills from their older peers, acknowledge the value of the skills they currently have, and find support and build friendships based on respect and community. Older peers will act as mentors and teach camping skills such as: building and extinguishing a camp fire, building a tent, food preparation, cooking, cleaning, time organization, and other necessary life skills.



# Freedom to Fly



A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

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Adolescence is not just a phase; it's a transformative expedition. Erdkinder acknowledges this crucial period as a time of profound emotional and social evolution. In a nurturing environment, students are encouraged to safely express and manage their emotions, fostering resilience and emotional intelligence. The communal classroom ambiance is meticulously crafted to cultivate empathy, understanding, and robust social skills, which are indispensable for emotional maturity. (Carter, 2024, para. 8).
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## Prepare to Fly as our Proud Alumni!

Being responsible for the wellbeing of others is an important role in adulthood. Learning to manage and delegate to others are skills needed to succeed in the world today. Throughout the learner's stay in the Erdkinder program, they have been involved with the organizing and planning of the yearly Spring camping excursions. Now, as the most senior members of the class, they will lead this year's camping excursion plans. They will use all of the skills they have learned during their Erdkinder experience and nurture and support their newest classmates, teaching them skills and introducing them to this yearly tradition.

The expectations for these learners are to:

- ~Create a welcoming environment that includes participation and contributions from all members of the class
- ~Create an organized timeline/schedule listing all of the arrangements needed to prepare for the camping excursion
- ~Decide how and what responsibilities to delegate to peers
- ~Prepare weekly meetings that show progress, discusses and solves any difficulties, and inspires peers for the next stages of this project
- ~Positively encourage and support classroom members who are showing difficulty with their tasks
- ~Demonstrate and teach skills that will create confidence for every participant, such as: how to chop wood, how to roll a sleeping bag, how to paddle a canoe, etc.
- ~Demonstrate a positive, encouraging, and inclusive experience for all class members



# Freedom to Fly



A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

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It is no wonder then that some adolescents become rebellious. They have learned many skills to become an adult and yet there are many other skills they do not yet have. Society tends to repress their right to use any of their adult skills up to the day of their eighteenth birthday. Montessori and many others have worked to raise awareness of this dilemma. The problem cannot be solved overnight because it is not a simple problem on adolescence; it is a problem of society in general. (Walls, 2008, p. 8).
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## Skills for Now and the Future

As the adolescent prepares for adulthood, this excursion will have them practice their developed responsibility, accountability, and community skills. Leading the class for the camping excursion, they will leave the Erdkinder program knowing they can:

- ~manage people in a work environment
- ~create educational and exciting experiences that benefits their community
- ~enter adulthood as responsible, resourceful, confident, and empathetic young adults
- ~confidently navigate the world and new experiences
- ~manage time and a busy schedule
- ~rely on their resources and resourcefulness when problems occur
- ~communicate effectively and empathetically with people
- ~trust their judgement on what is right or wrong when making

This will be a great year for of all of our students, but especially our graduating ones! Organizing this camping excursion will positively impact their peers for the rest of their lives! There is no better parting gift than the gift of joyful memories.

To all members of our gradutating class, we are proud of all you have accomplished and look forward to seeing where you choose to go in the future. This is just the beginning of your life’s adventure and we have been very blessed to have been a part of it!



# *Freedom to Fly*

A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

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**Follow the Child to Reach the Child**

Bridging Montessori Pedagogy with Inclusive Practices in Education

# Freedom to Fly

A program for adolescents who are at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome.

## Introducing: Freedom to Fly

### Who Are We?

We are a non-profit organization that is focused on helping adolescents gain the skills they need to successfully transition into adulthood.

We are community-based and encourage all Erdkinder students to join our program, regardless of their current knowledge and skill-level.

Created to help neuro-diverse adolescents at risk for “Failure to Launch” syndrome, our program is open to all who would like to benefit from it.

Mission statement: To empower neuro-diverse adolescents to successfully bridge into adulthood by providing safe, real-world experiences that boost confidence, inspire motivation, and dissolve anxieties.

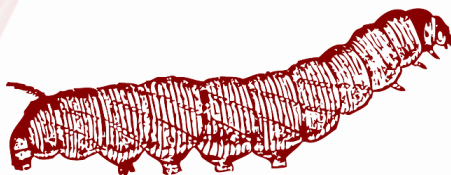
Vision statement: To eliminate “Failure to Launch” syndrome by normalizing the teaching of needed skills to create young adults who are confident and passionate about their future and the world.

Inclusivity statement: The Freedom to Fly program is open to everyone in the Erdkinder class. We do not discriminate based on age, race, religion, spiritual beliefs, physical disabilities, learning differences, socio-economic status, gender or sexual identity, or any other factor that makes us unique and valued members of society.

### What Do We Do?

By taking an experiential learning approach, we guide participants to learn skills through hands-on experiences. These experiences will provide confidence and knowledge to each participant and eliminate or lessen anxiety. By actively practicing these skills, participants will learn they are capable of succeeding and increase their self-esteem and self-confidence.

We provide a holistic educational experience that focuses on the participants social, ethical, cognitive and emotional development. Participants will be actively involved in their community, participating in social programs and services. They will learn about the diversities in their community and how they can relate to and assist others. These activities may include: shopping for the elderly, house-cleaning, and property maintenance.



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## How Do We Do It?

Focusing on self-care, each participant will learn how to take care of their own hygiene needs, health needs, and economic needs. Participants will learn basic hygiene skills, shopping skills, and economic skills like opening and managing their own bank account.

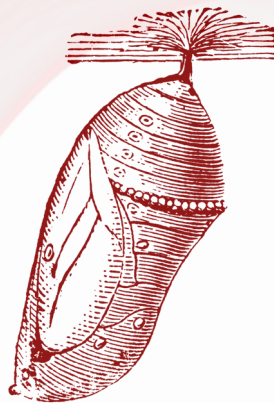
Our focus will then shift outwards towards the community. Participants will meet, interact, and learn about diverse members of their community. Although the participant may have their own diversities that limit them, they will learn they also have strengths that are helpful, needed, and valued within their community.

Through community works and services, each participant will build upon their social, ethical, cognitive, and emotional development. They will begin to discover how they are capable to make change in their community and they will be encouraged to follow these new interests.

Participants will also participate in the workforce. Learning to create a resume and cover letter, as well as acquiring interview skills, are essential in today’s adult world. Every participant will attend 3 job interviews and learn how to handle of disappointment of rejection letters as well as grow from the experience. Every participant will be successful with one interview and spend some time at this company, networking and gaining on-the-job skills.

## Why Do We Do It?

Adolescents of today are growing up in a world we don’t identify with. They have developed many anxieties about being independent and self-sufficient. Some adolescents are able to push past these anxieties, while others develop addictions and avoidance strategies. For these adolescents, learning how to overcome these anxieties, (and why they should), may prevent them being diagnosed with Failure to Launch syndrome and support them to transition successfully into adulthood.





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## **Launch and Release!**

Freedom to Fly is also working with the Erdkinder class to help transition new students into the classroom and older students out into the world.

Every Erdkinder learner will participate in organizing a weekend camping trip that will take place in June. The most senior members of our class will be responsible for the development and execution of this trip, which will involve including and mentoring the youngest members to help with the planning and organization. Students will be focused on teamwork, team-building and management skills; working together to create an event that will be enjoyed by all will be the highlight of this academic year!

## **How Can You Help?**

### Donate!

We are always accepting monetary donations. Many members of our community cannot afford to invest in this program, which is \$250 per participant. Donations mean we can cover this cost for families that cannot.

### Mentor!

You can help by volunteering to mentor our participants through job interview opportunities and by mentoring one participant as a temporary employee.

### Volunteer!

We need community members to volunteer their house and property for cleaning and maintenance work. It is imperative that our participants learn household and property maintenance skills to increase their independence and acknowledge their strengths. By assisting members of their community, each participant will gain confidence in their ability to make a difference.

