

Forest Bluff School

Montessori Parenting Blog Index

Find practical suggestions for implementing Montessori practices at home & gain a deeper understanding of Montessori parenting and education

<https://forestbluffschool.org/blog/>

[Art, Culture, and Nature: A Montessori Approach to Appreciating Beauty](#)

September 2022

Art, Culture, and Nature: A Montessori Approach to Appreciating Beauty

by Laura Earls (Based on her AMI Conference Presentation), edits and contributions by Margaret J. Kelley
In a Montessori classroom, experiences with art, culture, and nature are intertwined with the children's daily lessons and work.

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[Parents, Take Charge!](#)

August 2022

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

In addition to love and nurturing, young children need leadership and limits from their parents. We share how parents can lead with confidence and why it's so important to their child's development.

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[Montessori Summer Activities in Your Own Backyard](#)

June 2022

by Margaret J. Kelley

We share some Montessori summer activities that children of all ages would enjoy.

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[Returning to Our Montessori Values After Two Years of Screens](#)

May 2022

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

After a lot of screentime during the pandemic, it's time to return to our Montessori values and to prioritize real interaction with the environment and between individuals.

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[What is Normalization?](#)

April 2022

by Margaret J. Kelley

Maria Montessori used the term "normalization" to describe a positive state of being that children bring about by their own activity, through deep concentration and productive work. Today, we might think of it as the inner development of a child's best self.

90

[Assessment and Evaluation the Montessori Way](#)

March 2022

by Margaret J. Kelley

The Montessori approach to assessment and evaluation of student learning is based on careful observation and note-taking, not tests and grades.

89

Let's Play! Montessori's Playful Nature

February 2022

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

In Montessori children are able to meet their developmental needs through purposeful activities that often feel more like play than work.

88

What is Essential? Moving Forward in a Pandemic

January 2022

by Margaret J. Kelley

A Montessori parent reflects on what has been essential for her throughout the pandemic: friends, kindness, and the ability to create joy.

87

Have Faith in the Children

December 2021

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Dr. Montessori reminded educators and parents to "Have faith in the child," observing that children are highly capable at every age.

86

Sanctuary of the Spirit

November 2021

by Paula Polk Lillard

(Edits and contributions by Margaret J. Kelley)

As parents and teachers, we can nurture the human spirit by meeting each new day with resilience and optimism.

85

Developmentally Appropriate Montessori Gifts

October 2021

by Margaret J. Kelley

Here are suggestions for developmentally appropriate Montessori gifts that kids will love and use for years to come.

84

Providing Peace in the Pandemic: The Montessori Approach to Living Well in Anxious Times

September 2021

by Laura Earls

As we continue to navigate through an uncertain time, there is much families can do together to provide a sense of peace: nature walks, game nights, reading aloud, practicing gratitude, and more.

83

[*Cosmic Education for Gratitude and Respect*](#)

August 2021

by Laura Earls

(Edits and contributions by Margaret J. Kelley)

"Cosmic Education" is the foundation for the Montessori Elementary curriculum. Every lesson is presented as a part of a whole, giving children an understanding of their moment in history, as well as their place in the world, and all the ways they are connected to and dependent on other people and other life forms.

82

[*Wilderness Trips in a Pandemic: "A Minor Miracle!"*](#)

July 2021

by Margaret J. Kelley

The wilderness trips, an essential part of the Montessori Secondary Level at Forest Bluff School, were a great success for our resilient students and teachers this year.

81

[*Putting on a Play in a Pandemic: Let Us Sing!*](#)

May 2021

by Margaret J. Kelley

This year's Drama Workshop was reimagined and restructured for Covid in a way that was unexpectedly magical and quintessentially Montessori.

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[*Montessori and the Power of Mental Association*](#)

April 2021

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Associative thinking is a key to innovation and problem-solving. At every age, Montessori cultivates the ability to make mental associations.

79

[*How Montessori Fosters Curiosity and Courage*](#)

March 2021

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Montessori graduates share how the traits of curiosity and courage fostered at school play an important role in their present lives.

78

[*Music in the Montessori Classroom*](#)

February 2021

by Paula Lillard Preschlack and John Dickson

Music education is woven into the Montessori classroom for all children and at all developmental stages, contributing to a joyful and enriching learning environment.

77

[Four Montessori-Inspired Activities for the Winter](#)

December 2020

by Margaret J. Kelley

Here we share four Montessori-approved and inspired activities for this unusual, socially-distanced winter, from an indoor carnival to an outdoor cookout.

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[A Montessori Parent's Reflection: Finding Joy in Winter](#)

November 2020

by Margaret J. Kelley

Challenging times offer us an opportunity to develop the qualities we so admire in others: resilience, gratitude, empathy, courage, and hope.

75

[Adolescents Find Strength in Nature and Community](#)

October 2020

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

On the Secondary Level outdoor work trips at Forest Bluff School, adolescents find strength in nature and community life.

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[The Forest Bluff Montessori Lunch](#)

September 2020

by Margaret J. Kelley

A quintessential Montessori experience that builds responsibility, self-esteem and independence.

73

[What's So Great About "The Great Lessons"?](#)

September 2020

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Maria Montessori's Great lessons provide the framework for children's understanding of the world, the drama to fuel their imaginations, and the impetus to explore with their relentless curiosity.

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[Returning to School with Resilience, Creativity, and Courage!](#)

August 2020

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Preparing your children to return to school during this unusual time. Adaptability, being resilient, exercising creativity and practicing courage.

71

[Supporting Your Child's Self-Mastery](#)

July 2020

by Margaret J. Kelley

The importance of being in control of ourselves. Having self-mastery means being physically and emotionally regulated.

70

[Seek to Understand; Educate for Peace](#)

June 2020

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Educating your children on different races, religions and customs. Dr. Montessori showed us that peacefulness comes from children feeling at peace, valued and respected.

69

[How Can I Help?: Creating a Routine with Chores](#)

May 2020

by Margaret J. Kelley

Chores are beneficial to children. It gives them a sense of responsibility and community and it's good for their self-confidence and self-esteem. This blog discusses establishing a chore system in your home.

68

[Montessori Classroom Principles Work at Home, Too!](#)

May 2020

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Children need time, choice, grace and courtesy as part of their daily lives to develop inner calm. Ideas to cultivate these themes at home.

67

[The Stories of the Forest: Lichens, Fungi, and Mosses](#)

May 2020

by Abbey White

Information and ideas on exploring nature, searching for these items and discussing, observing and learning about our findings.

66

[Through Darkness to the Light](#)

April 2020

by Paula Polk Lillard

Beautiful personal writings from Paula Lillard reflecting on her childhood memories of the polio epidemic, World War II and growing up. Thus teaching us, in the most difficult times, the intangibles within us enable us to grow in the knowledge and love of our world and human life within it, and thus travel through darkness into the light.

65

[Putting on My "Montessori Teacher" Hat](#)

April 2020

by Margaret J. Kelley

Ideas on Montessori practices: Prepare the environment, observe, connect, freedom and responsibility.

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[Creating Security at Home: Self-Care and Finding your Rhythm](#)

March 2020

by Margaret J. Kelley

The importance of self-care (exercise, nature, connection with family and friends) during the state mandated “stay at home” order.

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[Routines at Home: Creating Hope in Challenging Times](#)

March 2020

by Margaret J. Kelley

Turning a challenging time into an opportunity to reflect, learn and creating routines at home.

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[Talking to Children About the Uncertainties of Life: Updated for Coronavirus \(March 2020\)](#)

March 2020

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Preparing and talking to your children about unfortunate events in life. Respecting your children’s feelings and experiences by asking questions and listening.

61

[The “Montessori Today” Discussion Guide for Parents and Educators](#)

February 2020

by Forest Bluff School

A discussion guide to accompany the book “Montessori Today” written by Paula Polk Lillard.

60

[A Shared Vision of Peace: How Montessori Embodies the Values of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

January 2020

by Forest Bluff School

Celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the symbiosis that exists between Dr. King, Jr. and Dr. Montessori.

59

[Universal Children: Manifesting Montessori’s Vision](#)

December 2019

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Dr. Montessori’s approach to educate children on the importance of human diversity. Montessori children develop a natural appreciation and respect for all peoples, be open to new ideas, seek to understand one another’s perspectives, and to see the value of synergy.

58

[*Getting Your Children to Read at Home: Building a Family Culture*](#)

November 2019

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Reading to our children and creating a culture of reading is increasingly important to their success in academia and in life. We make suggestions on choosing reading content for children and give ideas to make your home more welcoming to reading and family time.

57

[*How Do Montessori Teachers Present Those Magical Materials?*](#)

October 2019

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

We describe how a Primary teacher presents materials to a child under age six, and how an Elementary teacher gives presentations to children over age six, and how they differ. We explore the role of the teachers and that of the materials. The magic is in the way that children learn independently through their use of the materials themselves. This is a feature completely unique to the Montessori approach.

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[*Apple Activities with Your Young Child*](#)

September 2019

by Margaret J. Kelley

When apple-picking season arrives, there are many activities for you to do with your young child all based around the beautiful apple. Here you'll find some fun, simple ideas for you to try this fall.

55

[*The Montessori Young Children's Community*](#)

August 2019

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Take a peek inside the Montessori Young Children's Community and see how this classroom provides children as young as 18 months with an environment and activities that meet their developmental needs.

54

[*Talking to Children About Money*](#)

August 2019

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Talking about money can be uncomfortable for some families. Maria Montessori believed that this topic should be studied like all others. Here, we offer suggestions for talking to children of all ages about money.

53

[*A New Resource for Parents and Educators: "Montessori From the Start" Discussion Guide*](#)

June 2019

by Forest Bluff School

"Montessori From the Start: The Child at Home, from Birth to Age Three" was written by Paula Polk Lillard and Lynn Lillard Jessen as a resource for parents who wish to implement Montessori principles at home. The discussion guide provides questions for discussion and food for thought while reading this book.

52

[*Cultivating the Scientific Mind: Montessori Science, Part II*](#)

May 2019

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

A continuation of Montessori Science Part I (see below), this blog discusses how a Montessori education fosters deeper scientific inquiry throughout a child's Elementary and Secondary Level years.

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[The Birth of the Scientific Mind: Montessori Science, Part I](#)

April 2019

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

A scientific mind is one that can classify and organize information in a systematic and logical way.

Experiences with the Montessori materials and in nature are excellent starting points for building a scientific mind.

50

The First Months: Developing an Outlook for Life

March 2019

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

We provide practical considerations for new parents on ways to give newborn children the freedom to move and explore, including suggestions for the arrangement of your nursery, mobiles, and other developmentally appropriate toys.

49

In Pursuit of the Correct Answer: The Role of Process and Discovery in Montessori

February 2019

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

In a traditional school setting, a child's understanding is often measured in errors and wrong answers. The Montessori approach to education, on the other hand, gives children the opportunity to arrive at the answers through exploration and repetition, a process that allows children to confidently take ownership of their education.

48

Screen Time and Your Child's Development: A Montessori Perspective

January 2019

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

How much screen time is too much? We discuss the Montessori approach to screen time and address concerns that parents might have in a technology-driven society.

47

Fostering Your Child's Imagination: Fantasy vs. Reality

December 2018

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Dr. Montessori observed that when young children move their bodies, explore, and interact with the real world, these sensory experiences foster imagination. Fantasy, on the other hand, can be overemphasized and confusing for very young children. Maria Montessori articulates the distinctions between reality, the imagination, and fantasy.

46

Natural or Man-Made: What do Children Need First?

November 2018

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Which environments—natural or man-made—do our children need to be exposed to for understanding the world they are growing up in? Maria Montessori recognized the need to begin with exploration of and curiosity about the natural world, as we launch into humanity’s great inventions.

45

Expect the Best, Prepare for the Worst, Survive the Fall Trip

October 2018

by Abbey White

Each year, the Secondary Level students at Forest Bluff embark on a two-week camping and service trip, demonstrating their capacity for independent, quality work. Here we discuss the preparation that goes into this annual outdoor learning experience.

44

The Four Planes of Development: Child Development in Four Questions

September 2018

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Maria Montessori’s extensive observations of children revealed four universal planes of development. Montessori designed an entire educational system around these stages of childhood, which we discuss here in detail.

43

An Education that Matches Children’s Development

September 2018

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Developmentally, children pass through distinct phases as they age, which are universal across time and place. These phases, or planes, are the basis for Maria Montessori’s approach to education, which caters to the specific needs and characteristics of each plane.

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Our Living Land Laboratory

August 2018

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

At Forest Bluff, we are fortunate to have a beautiful prairie right on our property, where children learn about land stewardship and the interconnectedness of the natural world.

41

Lose Those “Summertime Blues!”

July 2018

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Summer can actually be a stressful time for busy parents. We offer practical suggestions to help parents avoid the summertime blues.

40

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: Must-see Wildlife in April and May

April 2018

by Abbey White

Spring in the Great Lakes Region can be a magical time to view wildlife, if you know what to look for! Forest Bluff School's naturalist provides parents with suggestions for viewing springtime wildlife in all its glory, with activities appropriate for all ages.

39

A Montessori Approach to Helping Children who are Stealing or Lying

March 2018

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Stealing and lying are normal childhood behaviors, but when they become persistent, parents can turn to Montessori for a healthy perspective and practical suggestions for addressing these undesirable behaviors.

38

How Montessori Education Prepares Children for Life Beyond School

March 2018

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

The reflections of Montessori alumni offer us a glimpse of the myriad ways in which Montessori education positively impacts students well after they have left the classroom. See inspiring video clips of Forest Bluff graduates reflecting on their educations!

37

Learning to Love Effort: How Montessori Fosters Perseverance

January 2018

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Montessori fosters perseverance by providing children with purposeful work. Find out how this inspires children's intrinsic desire to exert effort, and to reap the rewards.

36

A Montessori Guide to Technology and Teens

December 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

As screens become more prevalent in our lives, parents can look to the Montessori approach as a simple guide for how to handle teens and technology.

35

Freedom and Responsibility: How Choices and Limits Help Children Develop Character

November 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

As parents, we all want our children to develop character. But what can we do to support that process? The Montessori concepts of freedom and responsibility are discussed, along with practical advice for how parents can help children to develop their own will.

34

Maria Montessori Speaks to Parents: A New Book Illuminates How to Simplify our Parenting Roles

September 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

In the book *Montessori Speaks to Parents*, Maria Montessori shares practical parenting advice based on her keen observations of children. Find out how this little book can be a comfort and an inspiration.

33

Lessons from Montessori: Preparing Ourselves with Grace

September 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Parenting with grace can sometimes be a challenge. We discuss how parents can apply lessons from Montessori teacher training to child-rearing in the home.

32

The Montessori Approach to Literacy: Part III

August 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

We offer suggestions for fostering literacy and creating a culture of reading at home.

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The Montessori Approach to Reading and Writing: Part II

June 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

The Montessori approach to reading and writing is discussed, with examples of materials and games that assist children in their literacy development.

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The Montessori Approach to Reading and Writing

May 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

The first of our three posts on the Montessori approach to reading and writing provides information on preparing young children for the literacy process.

29

Building Happiness: To Be [Happy] or Not to Be...That is the Question

April 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

We all want our children to be happy. Learn how the Montessori philosophy can inform your approach as your child is building happiness from within.

28

The Birds, Bees, and Beyond: Talking to Children About Sex

March 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Whether your child is asking questions about where babies come from or repeating a confusing comment they heard, here we offer guidance for talking to children about reproduction and sexuality.

27

Your Attention, Please: Bring Home Lessons in Concentration from Montessori Classrooms

March 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Get tips for creating an environment that will help your child develop their abilities to concentrate, taking inspiration from Montessori classrooms.

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Timeouts & Tantrums; Are We There Yet?

February 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Tantrums can be frustrating, but “time outs” aren’t necessarily the answer. Maria Montessori's perspective helps us understand these trying moments with our children of any age, and offers ways to handle them gracefully.

25

Winter Weather Fun

January 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Looking for tips on how to get outside in winter weather and have fun? Here, we share ideas, advice, and possible outdoor activities for children of all ages.

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Growing Our Roots, Connecting Our Branches: Uncertainties of Life

January 2017

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

We discuss how to talk to children about situations that may bring up painful emotions, as they learn about living with the uncertainties of life, such as death or tragedy.

23

How Our Children Develop Moral Values

December 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Learn more about Montessori's approach to how children’s develop moral values, and how this is supported at Forest Bluff School.

22

Including Children in Holiday Family Traditions

November 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

The holidays are a joyous time for families big and small. We share some practical ideas for parents on including children in holiday family traditions in meaningful ways.

21

Public Montessori Schools: Planting the Seeds

November 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

On a trip to public Montessori schools, Head of School Paula Preschlack contemplates the past and future of the Montessori movement. Learn about Paula Polk Lillard's central role in the founding of public Montessori schools in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the 1960's.

20

Developing Inner Order: How We Can Help Our Children

October 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Young children need order and routines at home. Parents can support them by setting up sequences, physical order, and predictable environments where they can interact contently and freely.

19

Learning Emotional Balance Through Montessori

September 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

As a truly holistic approach to education, Montessori highly values and supports a child's emotional development at every age. At Forest Bluff School, we find guidance in the Montessori approach to learning emotional balance, which emphasizes self-governance in action and thought.

18

Boundaries and Freedom: Creating Space for Children

September 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

From their early years, start developing healthy relationships with your children by creating space for them where they have the freedom to make choices.

17

Self-Directed Playtime is not Wasted Time

August 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Let your children play! Here we explain that children develop more problem-solving skills, resilience, courage, and creative thinking skills when adults allow them free time for self-directed playtime.

16

Summer Activities for Montessori Children

July 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Summer is a marathon, not a sprint! These ideas for outings and home activities will allow you and your children to experience the joys of summer, without the exhaustion of over-scheduling.

15

Teaching Good Manners in Public

July 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Learn about the Montessori approach for teaching good manners to your children. Here we explain the different approaches for teaching children under age 6, and over age 6.

14

The Postcard: A Montessori Education Moment

June 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Every child is unique. Montessori teaches us to embrace children in their uniqueness and have faith in their paths to adulthood. Paula Lillard Preschlack describes a mother's realization that despite the momentary worries, her son *will* work it all out!

13

Recommended Books for Montessori School Parents

June 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

We believe that all parents and educators will benefit from these engaging books that offer food for thought and practical parenting suggestions.

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Journey of a Montessori Parent

April 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

We discuss and review a blog post on the journey of a Montessori parent by Sveta Pais of Austin Montessori School.

11

Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes

April 2016

by Matt Robbins

Using the wisdom of Maria Montessori, Secondary Level teacher, Matt Robbins provides a roadmap for navigating our children's stages of development.

10

“Going Out”

March 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

Find out more about how Forest Bluff Elementary students extend their learning out of the classrooms and into the real world, with self-directed excursions.

9

Help Me to Help Myself: Part 1 of 3

March 2016

by Paula Polk Lillard

In the first of three blog posts, Forest Bluff School co-founder Paula Polk Lillard describes the importance of young children's independence.

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Help Me to Help Myself: Part 2 of 3

March 2016

by Paula Polk Lillard

How can parents help their children under the age of three to build the foundation for independence? It begins with building a strong parent-child relationship.

7

Help Me to Help Myself: Part 3 of 3

March 2016

by Paula Polk Lillard

The Montessori principles of "less is more" and "beauty lies in simplicity" are good guides for establishing the home that will best serve the inner lives of our children as they work toward independence.

6

Montessori's Steady March to "Somewhere"

January 2016

by Paula Lillard Preschlack

The 2010 documentary *The Race to Nowhere* raises grave concerns about how children are being affected by increased pressures from their schools and their parents to perform at the highest level. Montessori reminds us of what we can do as parents to support our children in being healthy and happy: prepare the environment, model healthy behavior, and provide freedoms that require responsibility.

5

Helping Young Children Learn to Tie Shoes

January 2015

by Forest Bluff School

At Forest Bluff, children as young as three experience the joy (and sometimes the frustration) of learning how to tie their shoes. We provide helpful tips for ways parents can support their children in learning this skill.

4

Embracing Challenges of Winter Weather: Why Dressing Skills Matter

January 2015

by Forest Bluff School

At Forest Bluff, the youngest of children are given the opportunity and dignity to learn to dress and undress themselves when going outside in winter. Mastering this act of self-care brings with it so many lessons that children carry with them in and out of school.

3

New Ways to Assist Your Child's Moral Development

June 2014

by Forest Bluff School

In "Raising a Moral Child," Adam Grant, a professor of management and psychology at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, reviews several recent studies that might change the way you think about the best ways to help children develop qualities such as kindness, compassion, and helpfulness.

2

An Interesting Article on the Importance of Handwriting

June 2014

by Forest Bluff School

At Forest Bluff we are dedicated to helping each child develop beautiful penmanship. In her New York Times article "What's Lost as Handwriting Fades," Maria Konnikova summarizes several recent studies that affirm what Montessori educators have long observed.

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If you find these blog articles helpful, please share with friends & relatives – they can subscribe, too!