



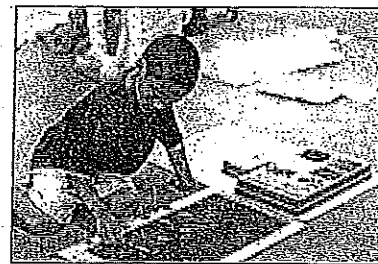
AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY
education that transforms lives

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Benefits of Montessori

Montessori education offers our children opportunities to develop their potential as they step out into the world as engaged, competent, responsible, and respectful citizens with an understanding and appreciation that learning is for life.

- **Each child is valued as a unique individual.** Montessori education recognizes that children learn in different ways, and accommodates all learning styles. Students are also free to learn at their own pace, each advancing through the curriculum as he is ready, guided by the teacher and an individualized learning plan.
- **Beginning at an early age, Montessori students develop order, coordination, concentration, and independence.** Classroom design, materials, and daily routines support the individual's emerging "self-regulation" (ability to educate one's self, and to think about what one is learning), toddlers through adolescents.
- **Students are part of a close, caring community.** The multi-age classroom—typically spanning 3 years—re-creates a family structure. Older students enjoy stature as mentors and role models; younger children feel supported and gain confidence about the challenges ahead. Teachers model respect, loving kindness, and a belief in peaceful conflict resolution.
- **Montessori students enjoy freedom within limits.** Working within parameters set by their teachers, students are active participants in deciding what their focus of learning will be. Montessorians understand that internal satisfaction drives the child's curiosity and interest and results in joyous learning that is sustainable over a lifetime.
- **Students are supported in becoming active seekers of knowledge.** Teachers provide environments where students have the freedom and the tools to pursue answers to their own questions.
- **Self-correction and self-assessment are an integral part of the Montessori classroom approach.** As they mature, students learn to look critically at their work, and become adept at recognizing, correcting, and learning from their errors.



Given the freedom and support to question, to probe deeply, and to make connections, Montessori students become confident, enthusiastic, self-directed learners. They are able to think critically, work collaboratively, and act boldly—a skill set for the 21st century.

Review of Research: Positive effects of Montessori education

Primary Reference Source: Murray, A. (2010). *Overview of research on Montessori education: An evidence-based curriculum*. American Montessori Society.

The following evidence has been gathered to support the effectiveness of Montessori education:

- In a study that followed Head Start (low-income) students into middle and high school, Montessori students achieved better in Math, Reading, and IQ by the end of 2nd grade and into middle school than their peers in other pre-kindergarten models. The authors noted that this trend was particularly strong among the boys in the study. (Miller & Bizzell, 1983)
- A researcher summarized the findings of prior studies with the analysis that 1 year of Montessori training at preschool positively impacts intelligence, visual-motor coordination, and students' ability to sustain attention to task. (Chattin-McNichols, 1981)
- Another analysis of almost 30 different school reform models concluded that Montessori has the largest impact on achievement among all those evaluated. (Borman et al, 2003)
- In Milwaukee, WI, (primarily "minority") students who attended Montessori primary schools achieved better on standardized tests of reading and math than their non-Montessori peers. (Lillard & Else-Quest, 2006)
- Another study in Milwaukee showed that students who attended Montessori programs between the ages of 3 and 11 outscored students who had attended non-Montessori schools on Math/Science exams at the high school level. (Dohrmann et al, 2003)

Other Sources:

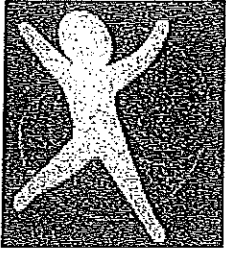
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Dohrmann, K. R., Nishida, T. K., Gartner, A., Lipsky, D. K. & Grimm, K. (2007). High school outcomes for students in a public Montessori program. *Journal of research in childhood education* 22 (2), p. 205.

Lillard, A. & Else-Quest, N. (2006). Evaluating Montessori education. *Science* (313), pp. 1893-1894.

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What to look for in a Montessori School



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As there is no regulating body monitoring the use of the name "Montessori" you will find that not all Montessori schools are the same

In selecting the right Montessori school for your child, you must consider how it meets your expectations, as well as how it suits your child. The only way to make this choice effectively is to carefully research and then observe the school in action.

Here are some essential Montessori school characteristics ...

The Montessori "prepared environment" - The Classroom

The Montessori classroom is designed specifically to meet the needs, interests, abilities and development of each child in the class. The focus is on children learning and not teachers teaching.

Children generally remain in the same classroom, with the same teacher, for a period of three years. The resulting multi-age grouping of children provides an atmosphere of community and allows children to learn from one another.

Generally students work individually or in small, self selected groups. There are very few whole class lessons. Children learn and progress at their own pace, moving on to the next step when they are ready.

Montessori equipment - Active learning

It is natural for children to move, touch and explore the world around them. The Montessori environment encourages children to move around freely and select work that captures their interest and attention. Through careful observation the teacher would strive to introduce work to further develop this area of interest or to draw their attention to new challenges and interests.

Montessori students in their pre-primary and early primary years, rarely learn from text or work books. Direct personal, hands-on use of real things or concrete models bring abstract concepts to life and allow children to learn with much deeper understanding. A large range of purpose designed Montessori materials should be available in all

subject areas.

Freedom within limits

Although Montessori children enjoy considerable freedom of movement and choice, their freedom always exists within carefully defined limits. They are free to do anything appropriate within the ground rules of the school community, but are redirected promptly and firmly, if their actions interfere with the freedom of others.

Rewards - Help or hindrance

Montessori children do not work for grades or external rewards.

One of Montessori's key concepts is that children learn because they share an innate desire to become competent and independent human beings. For this reason, external rewards to create motivation are not only unnecessary but can be detrimental to this process. Potentially it can lead to children and adults, who are dependent on others for approval for everything from self-image to making life choices.

Through the process of exploring concepts largely on their own and making independent choices, Montessori children construct a strong sense of their own individual personality.

Co-operation not Competition

Montessori students are free from one-up-man-ship and needless competition for attention and prestige, because each child learns at their own pace and the teachers refrain from comparing students against one another through testing, examinations and the like.

Montessori students are encouraged to treat one another with kindness and respect. Insulting and bullying behaviour tends to be rare. Instead we find children have a great understanding and fondness of each other.

Universal values

Dr. Montessori saw children as far more than simply scholars. Along with the rest of humanity, even the youngest child shares hopes, dreams, fears and the need to belong. From her perspective, this goes far beyond knowledge and mental health to the very core of ones spiritual existence.

Montessori consciously designed social communities and educational

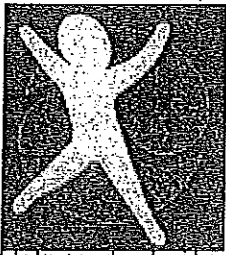
experiences that cultivate the child's sense of independence, self respect, love of peace, passion for self chosen work and the ability to celebrate the individual spirit of people of all races and ages. The value of all life.

All Montessori schools are largely international schools. They not only tend to attract a diverse student body representing many ethnic backgrounds and religions, but they celebrate their diversity. The curriculum is international in its heritage and focus, and consciously seeks to promote a global perspective.

The ultimate aim of all Montessori education is to promote world peace through fully developed people imbued with respect for all life.

Montessori trained teachers

World-wide a number of accredited Montessori training institutions operate recognised training courses for Montessori teachers. Generally teachers will undertake a one year full-time (or equivalent part-time) diploma course, which qualifies them to work with children in one of the following age groups: 0 - 3 years, 3 - 6 years, 6 - 12 years.



Help me to do it myself.

The Montessori Classroom

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Mixed age groups

Montessori classrooms place children in three year age groups, i.e. 3 - 6 year olds, 7 - 9 year olds, 10 - 12 year olds, 13 - 15 year olds and 16 - 17/18 year olds. This arrangement provides an atmosphere of community in which everyone learns from one another and everyone contributes.

As children get older, they assume a greater role within the class groups. Along with becoming an inspiration and role model, they also spontaneously share their knowledge with the younger children in the class. The considerate, respectful and caring attitude, developed from the earliest age, turns outwards with increasing age to include all the world.

Freedom within limits

The structured Montessori classroom provides freedom within clear limits. It gives children a great deal of flexibility to make their own choices about the kind of work to engage in, and whether to do it collaboratively or individually.

Freedom does not mean that children can do whatever they like. Rather, children are encouraged to think independently and act as a member of a social group. This is achieved, within clearly defined boundaries, through the freedom the children have of movement, of interaction and association, and the freedom they have to choose their own work and to learn at their own pace.

The Montessori Teacher

Like all great teachers, the Montessori teacher deliberately models the same behaviours and attitudes she is working to instil in her students.

The Montessori teacher is a trained observer of children's learning and behaviour. These observations are recorded and used to determine where each child is in his or her development. This also leads the teacher to know when to intervene in the child's learning with a new lesson, a fresh challenge or a reinforcement of basic ground rules.

As children learn in many different ways and at their own pace, the Montessori teacher is trained to "follow the child" and enhance the development of each of her pupils. They do this to a large degree, through the design of the classroom, selection and organisation of learning activities and the structure of the day.

In the prepared Montessori environment ...

- ☐ education is a natural process, spontaneously carried out by the individual through experiences upon that environment
- ☐ children work at their own pace and out of their own interest
- ☐ children are guided by the assistance of a teacher.
- ☐ there are no rewards or punishments
- ☐ there is no imposed competition
- ☐ "work" is purposeful, self-chosen activity
- ☐ caring and respect for others is fostered through a focus on what is shared by all humans

What you may want to think about or know about Montessori....

Who is Dr. Maria Montessori?

Teaching Method: There are no text books, and seldom will two or more children be studying the same thing at the same time. Children learn directly from the environment, and from other children—rather than from the teacher. The teacher is trained to teach one child at a time, with a few small groups and almost no lessons given to the whole class. She is facile in the basic lessons of math, language, the arts and sciences, and in guiding a child's research and exploration, capitalizing on interests and excitement about a subject. Large groups occur only in the beginning of a new class, or in the beginning of the school year, and are phased out as the children gain independence. The child is scientifically observed, observations recorded and studied by the teacher. Children learn from what they are studying individually, but also from the amazing variety of work that is going on around them during the day.

Areas of Study Linked: All subjects are interwoven; history, art, music, math, astronomy, biology, geology, physics, and chemistry are not isolated from each other and a child studies them in any order he chooses, moving through all in a unique way for each child. At any one time in a day all subjects—math, language, science, history, geography, art, music, etc.—are being studied, at all levels.

The Schedule: There is at least one 3-hour period of uninterrupted, work time each day, not broken up by required group lessons or lessons by specialists. Adults and children respect concentration and do not interrupt someone who is busy at a task. Groups form spontaneously but not on a predictable schedule. Specialists are available at times but no child is asked to interrupt a self-initiated project to attend these lessons.

Assessment: There are no grades, or other forms of reward or punishment, subtle or overt. Assessment is by portfolio and the teacher's observation and record keeping. The real test of whether or not the system is working lies in the accomplishment and behavior of the children, their happiness, maturity, kindness, and love of learning, concentration, and work.

Requirements for Age 3-6: There are no academic requirements for this age, but children are exposed to amazing amounts of knowledge and often learn to read, write and calculate beyond what is often thought usual for a child of this age.

Learning Styles: All intelligences and styles of learning—musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, intuitive, natural, and the traditional linguistic and logical-mathematical—are nurtured and respected.

Character Education: Opportunities for the valorization of the personality is considered at least as important as academic education. Children are given the opportunity to take care of themselves, each other, and the environment—gardening, cooking, building, moving gracefully, speaking politely, doing social work in the community, etc.

Work Centers: The environment is arranged according to subject area, and children are always free to move around the room, and to continue to work on a piece of material with no time limit.

The Results of Learning in this Way: In looking at the results one must be sure they are judging a class run by a fully trained teacher. Using Montessori without this training will not have the same results. When the environment meets all of the needs of children they become, without any manipulation by the adult, physically healthy, mentally and psychologically fulfilled, extremely well-educated, and brimming over with joy and kindness toward each other.

Supposing I said there was a planet without schools or teachers, where study was unknown, and yet the inhabitants—doing nothing but living and walking about—came to know all things, to carry in their minds the whole of learning; would you not think I was romancing? Well, just this, which seems so fanciful as to be nothing but the invention of a fertile imagination, is a reality. It is the child's way of learning. This is the path he follows. He learns everything without knowing he is learning it, and in doing so he passes little by little from the unconscious to the conscious, treading always in the paths of joy and love. —Dr. Maria Montessori, MD