

Montessori Curriculum



“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired

by listening to words but by experiences in the environment”

~Maria Montessori~

The Montessori classroom is divided into several logical areas by low open shelves: one area for Practical Life exercises, one for Sensorial, one for Language, one for Math and other areas for Geography, Science, Art and Music. The Montessori Curriculum is an integrated thematic approach that ties the separate disciplines together into studies of the physical universe, the world of nature, and the human experience. In this way, one lesson leads to many others.

The materials used in the Montessori classroom are specifically designed in such a way that children are naturally drawn to want to work with the materials with little or no prompting from adults. Each material isolates one concept or skill and has also been designed so that after receiving a lesson on the material, the child can work independently and check his own work; this is called “control of error”. The materials are used as tools to help the child work and learn at his/her own pace, to see abstract ideas presented in a concrete, three dimensional manners, and to help the child grasp and understand what they are working on. Montessori students learn not to be fearful of making mistakes. The children quickly understand that few things in life come easily and they can always try again without worry of embarrassment.

Practical Life

The foundation of the Montessori curriculum is the area of Practical Life. The purpose of this portion of the curriculum is to invite the young learner to act and work on real life tasks that nurture independence, coordination, order and concentration. This area contains many beautifully displayed objects that are familiar to the child and are commonly used for daily living tasks, such as eating, dressing and cleaning.

The materials are carefully designed and demonstrated offering the child meaningful, non-threatening forms of activity. These activities will help teach skills involved with caring for the environment and self, while encouraging responsibility, self-sufficiency and promoting confidence within the child.

Sensorial

Dr. Montessori believed in a holistic approach to education. She viewed the senses as the “doorway to the mind”. Dr. Montessori considered sensory and manipulation to be an aid to the development of the sense organs; eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin and also the preparatory point for intellectual growth. She understood that by helping the child to order, compare and classify sensory stimulation, their intellectual development would be significantly assisted and future learning would be more meaningful. The basic sensorial task encourages careful observation and awareness to specific qualities involving identification of likenesses and contrasts. The mind must judge, compare, classify and draw conclusions. Sensorial activities better prepare the child for future studies in math, language and science and sharpen the senses to the world around them.

Mathematics

The principal reason of the Montessori Math materials in the pre-school years is to help lay a foundation for later cognitive development and to prepare the child for the gradual transition to abstract thinking. The importances of these early activities in mathematics are realized in the way the child transforms ideas into actions on concrete materials. Children who learn math by rote method often do not have an actual understanding or the ability to put their skills to use in everyday life. Montessori Math materials and the “hands-on” approach to learning make abstract concepts clear and concrete to the young learner.

Language Arts

A successful Language Arts program is both comprehensive and dynamic and includes a broad range of activities such as active listening, public speaking, singing, reciting poetry, chanting, rhyming, reading and writing. Language development is encouraged throughout the entire Montessori classroom. Various activities from other areas of the classroom, along with small and large group activities, cultivate vocabulary development, communication skills and writing and reading readiness. In the language area you will find an assortment of materials both Montessori and non-Montessori for the young reader, including materials for phonetic analysis, word attack skills and reading, along with materials specific to the refinement of motor control necessary for writing. Learning how to read should be as effortless and simple as learning how to speak and the ability to read with fluency inspires a life-long love of reading. Intertwining Montessori and non-Montessori materials and activities in the Language Arts program gives the child the best resources for success in writing and reading.

Science, Geography, the Arts and Other Areas of the Curriculum

Science is an essential component of the Montessori Curriculum. It represents a way of life: a comprehensible approach to gathering information and problem solving. The Montessori science curriculum gives the child an introduction to botany, zoology, chemistry, physics, geology and astronomy. The child’s fascination with the universe is encouraged in the Montessori Science program and helps inspire interest in observing nature and discovering more about the world we live in.

Our teachers introduce history and geography as early as 2 years of age. The youngest students work with specially designed maps and begin to learn the names of the continents, while older students will study the continents, oceans and world cultures in greater depth. The students will learn to value their own cultural heritage and that of our friends in other parts of the world.

Music and movement education will also be a valuable part of the curriculum as well as the Arts. This allows the children to express themselves, their feelings, experiences and ideas and is also important in helping develop control of gross-motor skills.