
Montessori Philosophy

Maria Montessori believed, because of her observations, that children **would freely choose** work in an environment that was prepared according to her standards and the results would be optimal learning. Dr. Montessori's medical background, her understanding of the scientific method, her lifetime focus on how children learn resulted in a revolutionary education philosophy that is used throughout the world.

In accordance with Montessori philosophy the environment at Montessori Academy is constructed and maintained to encourage, facilitate, and empower each student to pursue a love of learning and construct his own unique, individual intelligence. It is student centered in its composition and design. Much thought and preparation is given to the materials placed in each classroom and their arrangement therein. The classrooms are intentionally dynamic in their composition and structure, in order to meet the changing needs and interests of the students. The environment empowers children by encouraging exploration of individual interests in a socialized context, through the display and orderly arrangement of beautiful Montessori materials and through the allowance for appropriate freedom of movement and social interaction within the classroom.

Montessori Academy is an authentic Montessori school, adhering to Montessori Philosophy and practices. Each classroom is staffed by Montessori certified teachers and assistants that maintain the required and appropriate student/teacher ratios to meet both AMS standards and the Department of Education for the state of Tennessee. Each classroom also maintains appropriate and recommended Montessori materials, is organized in a logical and student-friendly manner, materials are sequenced on the shelves, the environment is neat and orderly, the classrooms are calm, the children work independently, and the mission to *promote academic excellence in a caring, nurturing environment*, is upheld.

The American Montessori Society recognizes the following important principles of an authentic Montessori classroom:

- The aim is to foster competent, responsible, adaptive citizens who are lifelong learners and problem solvers.
- Learning occurs in an inquiring, cooperative, nurturing atmosphere.
- Students increase their own knowledge through self-initiated and teacher-initiated experiences.
- Learning takes place through the senses.
- Students learn by manipulating materials and interacting with others. These meaningful experiences are precursors to the abstract understanding of ideas.
- The individual is considered as a whole. The physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, spiritual, and cognitive needs and interests are inseparable and equally important.
- Respect and caring attitudes for oneself, others, the environment, and all life are necessary.

Our Philosophy of Education at MA

- Montessori Academy is a safe place where students feel accepted, secure and loved. Each of our students is treated with *kindness and respect*.
- Curriculum extends beyond the State of Tennessee curriculum requirements and is comprehensive, rich and effective, as proven by our consistently excellent SAT scores.
- Instruction is carried out individually, and in small and large sharing groups.
- Our positively stated ground rules help to develop and maintain a community that reflects harmony and respect for the environment, one's peers and oneself.
- Multi-age students bond as a community that reflects peace and respect. Each year first-year and new students move into established classrooms. Older students *mentor* the first year students and become the leaders in the class.
- Each classroom is guided by Montessori certified and trained teachers.
- Teachers and students speak quietly in the classroom. Students respect the need of their peers to concentrate during work time.
- Montessori materials are sequentially arranged. The materials invite hands-on learning and stimulate motivation.
- Students organize their daily/weekly plans and are expected to do most work at school. They work independently and are allowed to finish their work without being stopped by the "bell".
- Students become increasingly excited about learning.
- Accountability and responsibility are basic tenets of the Montessori philosophy.
- Use of the peace rose (in Lower Elementary) teaches conflict resolution skills.
- Students develop confidence and leadership skills.
- Foreign language begins at 3 years of age and continues through Middle School.
- Life skills are taught at every level at Montessori Academy.
- Our "Treasure Chest of Life Skills Program (Lower Elementary – Middle School) concentrates on developing accountability, confidence, conflict resolution, leadership, motivation, organization, self-respect, and responsibility.
- A strong partnering of teachers, parents and students enables students to achieve their maximum potential academically, physically, socially and spiritually at Montessori Academy.