

Montessori Principles

The following Montessori principles are valid throughout all subjects and during all planes of development.

Follow the Child

Dr. Maria Montessori's main task was to try to discover all aspects of natural human development. She believed freedom as the single most important factor in allowing children to develop as spontaneous, creative individuals. She saw the role of education as providing an environment in which the children could be allowed to follow their natural impulses to become wonderfully dynamic and joyful learners.

The Prepared Environment

The prepared environment contains materials that permit children to reach abstractions. The materials presented to the children contain either an indirect preparation for future work or the possibility of bringing into the light of consciousness something the child has already possessed in the subconscious. Children can also accomplish both at the same time. The materials analyze complex abilities and knowledge into their component parts, including isolation of quality or of difficulty.

We invite parents to take a close look at the Montessori classrooms. Notice that the furniture, shelves and arrangement of the classrooms are set up to allow freedom of movement; materials and furniture are designed for small hands and everything is accessible to the children. The classrooms belong to the children and as such, they take pride in its appearance and order.

Mixed Ages

Children in the classroom must be of mixed ages. There is a minimum of a three-year span required for each group; children must be able to move easily from classroom to classroom. This facilitates the natural role of peer to peer interaction and learning. Some children, especially the very young ones, often learn from observing others silently and intently. Through observation they absorb much more than it seems and are already preparing themselves for more active social participation in the community. Older children typically take on a leadership role as they show their younger classmates how to complete an activity.

A Planned Sequence with Freedom of Time

There is no “timetable” for the teaching of a particular subject. Children can stay with a subject for an indefinite period of time, allowing them to store more subconscious information to renew as conscious realization. We give freedom of choice and freedom of time as much as is practically possible. Dr. Montessori recognized that young children had a great interest in the precise movements connected with specific tasks. She also saw that, unlike most adults, the children were not interested in achieving end results as quickly as possible, but were far more interested in the learning processes. As a result children would happily repeat exercises again and again until they felt satisfied.

Individual Concentration

Abstraction is the result of individual experience. Each child must experience things for themselves, as a person cannot really benefit from other people’s abstractions. The time involved in reaching abstractions differs from person to person. Through their activities, work and social interactions, the children develop concentration, motivation, persistence, and discipline. Within this framework of order, the children progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities.

Dr. Montessori wrote, "It is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may always be ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience."

Interest is Key

The interest in certain exercises and activities are really determined by the sensitive periods during early childhood development and not by the efforts of the teacher alone. Every material in a Montessori classroom supports an aspect of child development, creating a match between the child’s natural interests and the available activities. Children can learn through their own experience and at their own pace. They can respond at any moment to the natural curiosities that exist in all humans and build a solid foundation for life-long learning.

Build a Community

Each Montessori classroom is a stable community for children to stay for least three years. Montessori children learn how to become an active part of the community at a very young age. They make friends by interacting with each other, they take grace and courtesy lessons, they learn how to observe, they practice leadership by taking care of their environment and taking care of their friends, they pay attention to details and they are happy to help whenever there is a need.