

(618) 931-2508.



## Metro East Montessori School

### KEY PREMISES OF MONTESSORI EDUCATION

MONTESSORI education is a philosophy of child growth and a rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on the child's developmental needs for freedom within limits, and a carefully prepared environment in which to develop intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities. It is designed to take full advantage of the self-motivation and unique ability of young children to develop their own capabilities. Children need adults to expose them to the possibilities of their lives, but the children themselves must direct their responses to those possibilities.

1. Children are to be respected as individuals who differ from each other.
2. Children possess unusual sensitivity and mental powers for absorbing and learning from their environment that are unlike those of adults both in quantity and capacity.
3. The most important years of growth are the first six years of life when unconscious learning is gradually brought to the conscious level.
4. Children have a deep love and need for purposeful work. The child works, however, not as an adult for profit and completion of a job, but for the sake of the activity itself. It is this activity that accomplishes the most important goal for the child: the development of his or her mental, physical, and psychological powers.

Preschool (Primary)	2 ½ - 4 ½ years	8:30 - 12:00	A.M.I. Montessori
Kindergarten & Extended Day	4 ½ - 6 years	8:30 - 3:30	A.M.I. Montessori
Elementary (1 <sup>st</sup> - 6th grades)	6 - 12 years	8:30 - 3:30	A.M.I. Montessori

**TERM:** Sept. - May      **NO SUMMER SESSION**

**BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE:** (available to enrolled students only)

Before School Care:	7:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.
After School Care:	12:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Summer Care: (mid Aug - early Sept)	TBD

All preschool, kindergarten and elementary classes at our school are taught by A.M.I. Guides, holding the internationally recognized Diploma of the Association Montessori Internationale. All members of the teaching staff hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree and advanced degrees in various educational areas.

**Registered as a Nonprofit, Nonpublic Elementary School with the State of Illinois**

# **OBSERVERS ALWAYS WELCOME WITH AN APPOINTMENT**

## **Metro East Montessori School**

### **THE MONTESSORI APPROACH TO EDUCATION**

As a Montessori School, we adhere to the educational objective and philosophy developed by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), an Italian physician and natural scientist whose discoveries about how children learn revolutionized teaching concepts throughout the world in the first part of this century.

Dr. Montessori realized that no human being is ever educated by another person, and felt that the goal of education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies; but rather to cultivate his own natural desire to learn.

The Montessori classroom approaches this objective in two ways:

- 1) Each child is allowed to experience the excitement of learning by his own choice rather than by being forced.
- 2) He is assisted in perfecting his natural tools for learning so that his abilities will be at a maximum in all future learning situations.

Children want to master physical, emotional, and cognitive skills. Unless severely impaired, children naturally have the same drive to develop in a cognitive sense as they do in a physical sense. The desire of a four-year-old to read or a ten-year-old to master cube root can be just as strong as the desire of an infant to attain a sitting position, unless the desire has been diminished by some circumstances in the child's life.

The child is a whole being – the physical, emotional, and cognitive parts are interrelated. Each Montessori environment is designed to meet the needs of the child in all these areas. In her writing, Dr. Montessori frequently compared the mind of the young child to a sponge, feeling that "the most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to six." At this age, children are forming their greatest implement—their intelligence. The child does this through actively exploring—handling, touching, tasting, and smelling the world around him—sorting out his impressions, and ordering his experiences. The activities in a Montessori classroom invite the child to explore, thus reinforcing his impressions by using his hands for learning. Children in the Montessori classroom are peaceful and happy because they are active and learning. All aspects of his personality (physical, emotional, and cognitive) are integrated.

The life of the child is a developmental continuum. Each stage has its base in the preceding one and in turn prepares for the next. This natural continuity is maintained in the Montessori school setting: normal groupings in a Montessori school might include children from eighteen months to three years, three to six years, six to nine years and nine to twelve years. Metro East Montessori School currently has two classrooms for children two and a half to six years of age, one classroom for children six to nine years of age, and one classroom nine to twelve years of age.

Children before the age of six are very different from children after this age. These differences are reflected in the environments prepared for this age group. The Primary (2½ -6) classrooms at Metro East

Montessori School are indeed a child's world, geared to the size, pace, and interests of young children. Low shelves, tables, and chairs provide a flexible arrangement for many activities.

The Montessori materials in each classroom can be divided into five main groups: the Practical Life exercises, which are the beginning activities for the two, three, and four year old child, assist him in coordinating his body and improving his work habits by increasing his attention span, concentration, independence, and self-confidence; the Sensorial materials help the child refine his perceptions, sharpen his senses of sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing, and hone his ability to compare, contrast, and make judgments; the Math materials aid the young child's understanding of the number system as he playfully shares, combines, counts, and compares concrete representations of quantities; the Language lessons lead a child to reading and writing through games and manipulative materials; and Cultural materials introduce him to the world outside his classroom, involving the young child in subjects such as biology, geography, geology, history, art, and music in a sensorial way. Attractive educational materials beckon to the child in the classroom and invite him to explore the basic information demonstrated by each scientifically designed activity. Over seventy years of experience has proved that children can learn to read, write, and calculate in the same natural way that they learn to walk and talk. They do this at their own periods of interest and readiness.

An important factor in establishing a community feeling in the classrooms is to have a three-year age span. Since each child proceeds at his own pace, each is better able to enjoy his own accomplishments rather than comparing himself with others in the class. This attitude frees the children to like each other and to be cooperative. Mixing age groups also means that younger children can learn through observation of older children and through being taught by the older children. The older ones in turn reinforce and clarify their knowledge when they teach younger ones.

The grade school age child (6-12) has different needs and again these are met in the prepared Montessori elementary environment. Here too, age groupings are flexible and young children work alongside older children, each at their own level. The ideal Montessori school would have interconnecting classes where younger children could go into the next older class and vice-versa as their needs direct them—the transition between the two stages is generally very gradual and occurs at different times for different children. The appropriate group for a child is determined by the characteristics being exhibited by the child at the time as these are more important indications than age or time of year of which group a child will feel most comfortable and work best in.

Grades (or "marks") as known in traditional education are not part of the Montessori elementary classroom. Children following their own interests and working independently achieve their greatest reward from their own feelings of satisfaction. But the children's work is monitored carefully and Standardized Tests are offered starting in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of elementary. Lengthy progress reports are given to parents outlining each child's work in the various areas of language, math, science, social studies, geography, biology, history, art, music, and Spanish.

Montessori is interested in aiding mental growth and helping each child fulfill his potential. By allowing the children to work together, each at his own pace, to choose their activities, and to follow their own unique timetables for development, the Montessori elementary classroom creates an atmosphere of joyful enthusiasm for learning and affection for hard work.

The Montessori school is a miniature society in which children live and learn to work cooperatively. The school is set up in such a way as to facilitate this kind of growth. The basic ground rules for behavior in each class are based on the respect for each individual's rights and the children become responsible for their own behavior and grow in social awareness. The aim of a Montessori school like ours is to create a situation in which children will like others, respect the rights of others, feel a responsibility to others, and

respect their own individuality. Hopefully, this will prepare children for full responsible participation in society.

## **Metro East Montessori School**

### **MARIA MONTESSORI: WHO WAS SHE?**

Maria Montessori was born in Ancona, Italy in 1870. When she was 12, her parents moved to Rome and encouraged her to become a teacher, the only career open to women at the time. She was first interested in mathematics, and decided on engineering, but eventually became interested in biology, and finally determined to enter medical school.

In 1886 she became the first woman to graduate from the University of Rome Medical School and joined the staff of the university's Psychiatric Clinic. As part of her duties, she worked with the clinic's children and over time became convinced these children could profit from special education and studied the work of pioneers Jean Itard and Edouard Sequin.

Montessori was named director of the State Orthophrenic School in 1898. She worked with the children there for two years. All day she taught in the school and then worked preparing new materials, making notes and observations and reflecting on her work. These two years she regarded as her "true degree" in education. To her amazement, she found these children could learn many things that had seemed impossible. This conviction led Montessori to devote her energies to the field of education for the remainder of her life.

Dr. Montessori returned to the University of Rome to study philosophy, psychology, and anthropology. She also served on the staff of the Women's Training College in Rome (one of the two women's colleges in Italy at that time), practiced in the clinics and hospitals in Rome, and carried on a private practice of her own. In 1907 she was asked to direct a day care center in a housing project in San Lorenzo, Italy. Montessori accepted, seeing this as her opportunity to begin her work with the children of San Lorenzo. She was to have care of sixty children between the ages of 3 and 7 while their parents were working. The sparse furniture was similar to that used in an office or home, and the only educational equipment was the pieces of sensorial apparatus Montessori had used with the children from the clinic.

Montessori says she had no special system of instruction she wished to test at this point. She attempted to set up as natural an environment as possible for the children, and then relied on her own observations of what occurred. After instructing the teacher in the use of the sensorial apparatus, she remained in the background, and waited for the children to reveal themselves to her.

There was one startling development of direct academic significance. Montessori had not intended to expose children so small to any activity bearing on writing and reading. The mothers began to beg her to do so. She finally gave the four and five year olds some sandpaper letters to manipulate, and trace over with their fingers. Some children eventually began to connect sounds with the letters, and to try to sound out and put together words. Soon, they had taught themselves to write. They would read the words they had written, but were uninterested in those anyone else had written. They then began to read with the same enthusiasm that they had written, reading every extraneous item in their environment--street signs, signs in shops, etc. They showed little interest in books, however, until one day a child showed the other children a torn page from a book. He announced there was a "story on it," and read it to the others. It was then that they seemed to understand the meaning of books.

They began reading them with the explosion of energy they had previously exhibited in writing and reading words encountered at random in their environment. The process was interesting on three counts: one, the spontaneity and direction of this activity from the beginning belonged to the children; two, the usual process, of reading preceding writing, was reversed; three, the children involved were only four and five years of age.

In observing all these developments in the children, Montessori felt she had identified significant and hitherto unknown facts about children's behavior. She also knew that, in order to consider these developments as representing universal truths, she must study them under different conditions and be able to reproduce them. In this spirit, a second school was opened in San Lorenzo that same year, a third in Milan, and a fourth in Rome in 1908. By 1909, all of Italy and Switzerland began using Montessori's methods in their orphan asylums and children's homes.

Word of Montessori's work spread rapidly. Visitors from all over the world arrived at the Montessori schools to verify with their own eyes the reports of these "remarkable children". Montessori began a life of world travel--establishing schools and teacher training centers, lecturing, and writing. The first comprehensive account of her work, *The Montessori Method*, was published in 1909.

Montessori made her first visit to the United States for a brief lecture tour in 1912. An American Montessori Association was formed with Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell as President and Miss Margaret Wilson, President Woodrow Wilson's daughter, as Secretary. So pleased was Montessori with her reception here she returned in 1915, this time to give a training course in California. During this visit a Montessori class was set up at the San Francisco World Fair and received much attention.

During the years 1916 thru 1918, Montessori herself traveled between Spain, where she was directing the *Seminari Laboratori di Pedagogia* at Barcelona, and the United States. Except for the temporary closing of Montessori schools in countries taken over by the Nazi and Fascist regimes, Montessori continued to flourish in other parts of the world without interruption. Much of this activity today is directed by the Association Montessori Internationale with headquarters in Amsterdam.

Montessori was appointed Government Inspector of Schools in Italy in 1922. However, she was increasingly exploited by the Fascist regime, and by 1931 she had begun to work chiefly out of Barcelona, and she established permanent residence in the Netherlands. Her work was interrupted in 1939 when she went to India to give a six-month training course, and was interned there as an Italian national for the duration of World War II. She established many schools in India, however, and today it is an active Montessori center. Montessori died in the Netherlands in 1952, receiving in her later years honorary degrees and tributes for her work throughout the world.

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