

Dr. Maria Montessori



"With Dr. Maria Montessori there came into the sphere of education a new and vital impulse. There is not a civilized country which has not in some measure felt the impact of her vivifying principles. This was made abundantly clear at the time of her death, in May 1956, when tributes to her lifelong labour on behalf of the child appeared in the press in every part of the world. Generations has passed since the year (1907) when the name Montessori flashed like a comet across the sphere of education, and the world read with astonishment of the almost incredible doing of those small slum children in the first Casa dei Bambini in Rome. Yet notwithstanding this considerable passage of time – a period in which two world wars took place – we find the Montessori principle as powerful today as ever it was. Indeed more powerful, for every year it continues to make fresh developments and new conquests."

- *Maria Montessori, Her Life and Work, p. xi*
- *Standing, E.M., (1959) Maria Montessori Her Life and Work, Academy Library Guild, California*
- *For more information about the history of Maria Montessori visit: http://www.montessoritraining.net/what_is_montessori/history.htm*

Basic Montessori Principles:



- The Prepared Environment.
- It contains didactic (self-teaching and self-correcting) materials which are especially designed and selected to allow children to discover and explore.
- It fosters in the child a healthy self-concept and inner discipline.
- It encourages a desire to investigate and an appreciation of the world around him.

- The structure and order as well as the beauty and atmosphere make the child fall in love with his 'work'. He feels rested and uplifted by it.
- The prepared environment in a Montessori class includes the following areas:
- Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Geometry and Algebra, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Botany and Zoology, Bible lessons, Art and Music.

Sensitive Periods



Dr. Montessori identified various sensitive periods in a child's life from birth to six years of age.

Sensitive periods are blocks of time in a child's life when he is absorbed with one characteristic of his

environment to the exclusion of all others, i.e. movement, language, small objects, order, music, grace and courtesy, refinement of the senses, writing, and reading.

Montessori classes with their child-sized open shelves and ordered materials allow the child access to exactly the right material at exactly the right period of their development.

Vertical Age Grouping



Dr. Montessori called it a 'society by cohesion'. Mixing ages together is a very important factor in achieving

harmony and unity; the class forms a group that is based on affection.

The older children are protective and compassionate. They lead by example and provide inspiration. The younger ones admire and follow without any jealousy.

They are happy and contented and beautiful in their forbearance of one another.

Control of Error



Montessori materials are designed for auto-education and immediate feedback. This unique feature lies in the material itself rather than in the teacher and is called the Control of Error. The control of error guides the child in his use of the materials and permits him to recognize his own mistakes.

He has the opportunity to rectify it and to persevere with his task without interference.

The child develops confidence, independence, honesty, inner-discipline and experiences fulfillment.

Is a Montessori school the right place for my child?

Yes!



For your assurance you will find the following to be true in a successful Montessori school.

Children are:

- Respected at all times so that their personal dignity is upheld.
- Given the responsibility for their actions and choices and so encouraged to develop spontaneous self-discipline.
- Allowed to work undisturbed, either by an adult or another child.
- Given freedom of choice within a controlled environment:

to **choose work** that interests them

to do **individual or group** work and

to work at a **table or on a mat** on the floor

- Given access to work that **engages both the hand and the mind**.
- Given unlimited **opportunity to repeat** an exercise as long as he likes.

- Allowed to **sit quietly doing nothing** (in solitude).
- **Writing before reading.**
- Given an **ordered environment** with a place for everything and everything always in its place.
- Given **shelves so low** the activities are displayed at the child's height, and narrow so the child can successfully lift materials off the shelf and put them back.
- Given activities each arranged and set up in a **progressive and orderly** way.
- Given a **work cycle** that includes fetching his own materials and putting them back **ready for the next person to use.**
- Given **care for the order** in the environment.
- Given the opportunity to develop a vivid creative **imagination based on truth and order** instead of mere flights of fantasy rooted in untruths.



Partly taken from: 'Letter from the Chairman' by Pru Ramsey.