

MONTESSORI ADDENDUM

CADENCE EDUCATION FAMILY HANDBOOK

THE MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

The Montessori philosophy of education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, the first woman to graduate from the University of Rome medical school. She became interested in education while treating mentally handicapped children at the university's psychiatric clinic. Gradually, Dr. Montessori realized that these children were capable of learning much more than was generally believed. Her teaching brought about remarkable results and set the foundation for the Montessori system.

Dr. Montessori began her work with non-handicapped children in 1907, when she was invited to organize schools in a reconstructed area of San Lorenzo, Italy. Her work was so successful that when she arrived in the United States at the end of 1913, she was heralded as "a woman who revolutionized the educational system of the world." The author of several volumes and numerous articles about education, Dr. Montessori died in 1952.

Montessori education is a "whole child" philosophy to help each child reach his/her full potential in all areas of life. It focuses on the concept that in order to develop fully, a child needs freedom within limits. The Montessori classroom, therefore, is a carefully prepared environment that offers specific materials and experiences that allow the child to develop his intellectual, physical, and psychological potential under the guidance of a specially trained Montessori teacher.

INTRODUCTION

There is a wholeness and balance to Montessori. The Montessori system of education is both 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, which guarantees exposure to material and experiences that develop intelligence, as well as physical and psychological abilities. The Montessori Method allows a child to work in a self-directed manner utilizing his/her unique learning style. Within certain limits, your child can choose work that appeals to his/her own inner interests. Gradually, a child builds a strong sense of independence, self-confidence and order as his/her skills increase. In the Montessori environment, your child self-constructs or teaches him/herself through the use of specially designed Montessori materials that are attractive and child sized.

The carefully trained teachers create an ideal environment for learning, combining specific educational techniques, materials and methodology. The role of the teacher is one of guide and observer as children progress at their own pace and rhythm. Our teachers attend to the smallest of needs to assure a safe, healthy and happy environment — day in and day out.

The Montessori classroom encourages the development of:

- Respect for others
- Self-esteem and self-confident
- Self-discipline
- Coordination
- Independence
- Social skills
- Emotional Growth
- Cognitive development

Ultimately, our goal is to help each child reach his or her fullest potential in all areas of life.

THE CHILD'S WORK

The word “work” has a happy connotation in the Montessori environment. The teachers use the word “work” rather than “play” in the classroom.

The young child’s work is the child’s play; at this age, they are one and the same.

We encourage the children to enjoy work for its own sake and ask for your understanding and cooperation in not soliciting your child to work on paper for praise or examination. Ways to encourage your child without pressure will be discussed with you if you wish. Each teacher has her individual plan for sending work home, but all Montessori teachers strive to help the child to achieve through his or her own efforts and to realize the reward from the work itself. All efforts to correct work for outside approval are discouraged. If you are patient, you will be greatly rewarded.

EDUCATION PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Based on the Three Year Learning Cycle:

Infant and Toddler Programs: In the Montessori infant/toddler environment, the adults assist each child’s unique pattern of development through keen observation of the child’s sensitive periods for language, movement, and order. The adult also follows the child’s need to become independent. Emphasis is placed on a trusting, collaborative relationship between Montessori staff, the parent, and the child in the caregiving process.

Primary Program: A Montessori Early Childhood Environment is described as a setting for independently toilet trained children between the ages of 3 through kindergarten. The environment reflects these characteristics:

- Curriculum material that is organized into logical groupings
- Within each grouping, there is a sequential arrangement of the materials
- Furnishings are an appropriate size for the children
- The arrangement of furnishings offers a variety of activity spaces
- Activity spaces and procedures are organized to avoid conflicts of interest
- There is a provision for display of visual stimuli and the work of the children
- Each activity or exercise is structured to provide purpose, including procedure and closure within an opportunity for the child's success
- The environment offers materials and activities that encourage the child to reach his/her potential through:
 1. Concentration
 2. Observation
 3. Awareness of order and sequence
 4. Large and small muscle coordination
 5. The acquisition of practical skills relevant to care of self and environment
 6. Perceptual awareness and discrimination including the ability to recognize and identify the attributes of objects
 7. Language skills including opportunities for listening, self-expression, instruction in writing, and learning other languages
 8. Experiences with the creative arts
 9. Understanding of nature and the physical universe

Kindergarten: The kindergarten year at our Montessori school is the most important year. This critical year is the capstone year which enables our students to culminate and capitalize on all of their previous years’ learnings.

The three year cycle includes kindergarten. Students learn to collaborate and work together in learning and on major projects. They strive for their personal best, rather than to compete against one another for the highest grade in their class. Our goal is to develop students who really understand their best work. Learning is not focused on drill and memorization. Students learn through hands-on experiences, investigation and research.

THE RATIONALE FOR A THREE YEAR MONTESSORI PROGRAMMED LEARNING CYCLE

Montessori's early childhood approach is based on her conception of the Absorbent Mind, which from 0-3 years of age, operates in an unconscious manner and from age three through kindergarten is developed with a child's growing awareness and active participation.

OUR TEAM

Our Montessori school instructional team includes Montessori certified teachers, Certified teachers, Montessori interns, Early Childhood Educators, and trained paraprofessionals.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Our Montessori staff guide children into developing safe and appropriate ways of interacting with others and with their environment. One of our goals is to help children develop tools to problem solve. Young children learn by experimenting, testing limits and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In the process of setting and enforcing limits, our teachers assist the children in developing self-control and respect for the rights and property of others. Children learn how to get along in a group while balancing the need for individual rights and self-expression.

Our staff is trained to help your child by word and example, to realize that the following actions are not appropriate behavior:

- Hitting, biting or harming other children or adults
- Teasing, name calling or making rude remarks
- Leaving the group without accompaniment by a staff person or a parent
- Showing disrespect for adults, students, the school environment, materials and equipment

Occasionally, children may be invited to work independently for a short time in order to regain self-control. In these cases, the child has an open invitation from the teacher to return to the group when he feels ready. Any separation from the group will always be within sight and hearing of the staff, and the length of time will be related to the child's age and maturity.

Inner Discipline: The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal at our Montessori school. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly, logical manner. Children choose work which they are capable of doing and are free to work on for as long as they wish without interference from others. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline, which might be present in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed age group allows the younger children to emulate the older children's more mature behavior.

However, the school reserves the right to exclude, withdraw or dismiss any student from classes or from school for the violation of any rules, regulations or payment of fees and tuition, and at the discretion of the Director. Children and adults are expected to respect the rights and needs of others and the environment.

If, in the judgment of the Director or designee, your child's behavior interferes with the School staff providing a safe and nurturing program, the School will contact you to remove your child for the remainder of the school day. The School requires that the child be picked up within **1 hour** of being notified. There will be no refund for the time missed during this suspension. Re-admission of your child to the program will be discussed at the time of the suspension.

In the case of repeated inappropriate behavior at any age level, consequences will be determined by the Director and teachers and could result in removal from the environment. Blatant or continued misbehavior of any kind is considered grounds for expulsion.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

The teachers evaluate each child's progress on an on-going basis, keeping careful record of lessons presented and skills and concepts mastered.

HOMEWORK

The Montessori environment is rich with daily experiences in self-motivation and self-organization. Homework comes from the students' desire to further research their desired interest from the work in the classroom. Homework is not regularly assigned. However, practice work on math facts and spelling may occasionally be brought home. Taking a responsible part in household chores should be expected as a contributing member of the family. A balanced lifestyle is valued in the Montessori philosophy.