

A photograph of two young girls holding hands and walking away from the camera on a wooden boardwalk. The girl on the left is wearing a white dress with a small blue and black pattern and light blue shoes. The girl on the right is wearing a dark dress with a colorful floral pattern and bright pink shoes. They are in a lush green field with trees in the background. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the upper part of the image, containing the title text.

# Montessori Teachers Program

## An Introduction

# TMTP An Introduction

Notice THE MONTESSORI TEACHERS PROGRAM

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An Introduction **MODULE 1**

**MARIA MONTESSORI WAS THE FIRST FEMALE**

**DOCTOR IN ITALY**

Maria Montessori's work has survived for over a century, most of the early years good practices found world over stems from her innovations and methods.

They include:

Activity based lessons

Child sized furniture

Freedom of movement in the classrooms

An overview-This is a brief introduction to Montessori History:

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## The Life and Work of Maria Montessori

### MARIA MONTESSORI

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was the first female medical doctor in Italy. She developed a new and radical view of early childhood as the most important period of human development beginning around 1900's.



Maria Montessori developed her method of education by observing the child as a scientist to see what she could learn. Her first observations were based on children with learning and other disabilities, thus the erroneous view that Montessori education is for children with learning disabilities.

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This is far from the truth, Maria Montessori did start working with children that were written off as unable to learn, but she later on worked with normal children as her methods had been so successful that it meant if employed with normal children much more could actually be achieved and this is exactly what happened. It was when she started working with normal children that her life work actually started and The Montessori Method of Education was born.

Maria Montessori's observations about the child will help you as a Parent or teacher to understand your child.

1. Every child has an inner teacher. Rather than lead the child as we do in the traditional sense Maria Montessori followed the child. She believed that an inner teacher and guide lived in each child, leading their development by following a natural pattern already set by God. Every child learns to walk, speak move and do basic life skills and by age six they have grown into individuals ready to live and function in their time and place of birth. The inner teacher really has been helping the child. As an Educator/ Parent Maria Montessori believed that we should trust the inner teacher of the child and "follow the child". This is her first principle of education.

2. Movement is intimately tied to development. Maria Montessori observed that children were constantly moving and taking possession of the world with their hands. The child spends a lot of time learning to purposefully control and coordinate movements, these play a direct role in developing the child's brain. The child uses movement to act on the world and thereby make discoveries.

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3. Children have a sense of urgency to become independent. Maria Montessori also observed that children were highly motivated to become independent and do things for themselves. They love getting an opportunity to practice and master life skills. They want to learn how to use their bodies and minds, do practical tasks themselves, learn about words and numbers and to understand their world. One child is famously known to have asked Maria Montessori to 'Help me do it myself!'

4. All children have an absorbent mind. The child is created with a mind that absorbs information from the environment like a sponge, by contrast, adults admire their surroundings. Children do not learn from the environment logically at least from 0 to 3 years Maria Montessori believed that a child unconsciously absorbs information from the environment and from 3 to 6 absorbs information consciously. She believed that a child who is focused on repeating an activity is busy creating fundamental brain structures will be used for life.

5. Children need concrete experiences from 3-dimensional objects. The child must handle the objects with their hands. Once adequate experience of handling the object has been gained the child can now visualize and recognize the shape e.g. the circular shape of the ball, plate or apple. It is only after this that the child learns the word that stimulates the thought of roundness. Maria Montessori believed that the child needed to explore the world by holding things in their hand and this view led to the concept of The Prepared Environment which we shall deal with later

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6. Children actually work, they are not playing as adults think. Most of a child's activity is directed at learning to become an independent individual ready to live and function in the time and place they find themselves. Our goal therefore is to create an environment for the child that delivers experiences and activities that are closely aligned with their natural developmental needs.

7. Concentration and Normalization. It is a known fact that children find it very difficult to concentrate. Yet Maria Montessori discovered some new facts: that if a child is given an activity that feeds their need to become independent at their developmental level, the child will exercise an incredible will to concentrate in order to master the activity. She realized therefore that when a child was given activities that helped to develop their brain and body, she was capable of deep attention and concentration. We must not forget that concentration is an important key to learning. The Montessori Method therefore uses activities in the 3 to 6 curriculum to encourage the development of a child's concentration skills and when the child has learned to concentrate he is said to be normalized.

This is because the child has become calmer and more confident. If a child earlier exhibited some behavioral issues these disappeared as the child's concentration skills increased. Montessori observed that as the child's concentration increased the child began to build a deep love for work, self-discipline and sociability. The ability to concentrate allows the child to learn more easily.

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8. The Concept of the Sensitive Periods. Maria Montessori noticed that children experienced specific periods of heightened interest in an aspect of the environment, when the child is highly attuned to learning a particular skill. She identified several sensitive periods such as, order, language, numbers, small objects, motor skills, reading, and writing. As we follow and observe the child we can provide activities in the area the child shows intense interest in during the sensitive period.

9. Sensory Experience. Since Maria Montessori observed that children experienced the world through their hands and other senses she developed Sensorial materials and started a specialized subject called Sensorial Education. These materials teach the child simply by handling and involving the child in making comparisons and decisions based on sensory information. This helps to open up millions of nervous nerve pathways, encouraging concentration, refining and educating the child's senses.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A MONTESSORI SCHOOL

There are so many schools all over the world claiming to be a Montessori school, as there are no regulating bodies monitoring the use of the name "Montessori" you find that not all Montessori schools are the same.



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It is important for Montessori schools that want to do what is right by the child to know what makes up a true Montessori setting. Put things in place, your Parents are getting to know better now, they will gravitate towards you and stick with you if you are doing your Montessori correctly. Lets look at some major features of a Montessori school.

A. Use of Montessori materials producing active learning. We believe that the child learns by moving, touching and exploring the world around them. This is why didactic materials that have been designed to educate the child are used in the Montessori environment. The child is therefore taught from the concrete to abstract. This hands-on approach enables isolation of specific concepts and allows the child to learn with much deeper understanding. It is not usual for a Montessori student in the pre- school and early nursery stages to learn from text- books.

B. Freedom with limits. Children in a good Montessori school enjoy considerable freedom in actual fact the child is allowed to move about freely and choose the material they wish to work with. The teacher observes the child and introduces work to develop the child's interest, and draws interest to more challenging concepts to further the child's understanding.

The child is free to move around, choose their work as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others. There is a firmly defined ground work of school community rules that the child learns to respect and follow. This instills respect for others, property as well as discipline.

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C. The Montessori 'prepared environment' – The Classroom is designed in such a way to meet the needs of the child and not the teacher teaching. It is the interest, the ability and development of each child in the class that matters. The usual thing is for a child to remain in the same classroom, with the same teacher for a period of 3 years. This helps to build a strong community sense with a class of multi-aged children who learn from one another and from a young age learn to work together as a team. Teaching is rarely done in whole class lessons, children tend to work together in small, self selected groups or individually. Children in Montessori schools learn at their own pace and move on when they are ready.

D. Rewards, are these a help or hindrance? Children learn primarily because they want to become competent and independent human beings. Rewarding a child for learning or doing great may compromise their innate need to become an independent person, can make them dependent on others for approval on issues of self image or for even life choice issues which is even worse. Montessori children are groomed to become self assured, independent with a strong sense of individual personality.

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E. Co-operation and not needless competition is more the core objective of the Montessori school. Thus testing and examinations are not really a Montessori regular activity. The children are encouraged to treat each other with kindness and respect. Children have a great understanding and respect for each other as competition is not an issue.

F. Universal values. The goal of a good Montessori school is to promote world peace through educating the child to respect life. The curriculum is international in its focus and details. The Montessori child is taught to seek world peace respect life and all human beings. The child is taught from an early stage about the diversity of the human race, to respect and celebrate it. This will be an important tool to help kill tribalism in the country.

G. Montessori trained teachers. The teachers in these schools are trained by accredited institutions or by other teachers trained by accredited members and therefore are qualified to work with children in one of the following age groups 0-3, 3-6, 6-9, 9-12.

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## THE BENEFITS OF A MONTESSORI EDUCATION

The true benefits of a Montessori education happen within the child. The primary skills we normally key into such as reading, writing, and using numbers are all byproducts of the strong brain development and positive, confident self- image that a Montessori education helps the child achieve. Therefore your child's ability to read, write and do mathematics is a visible result of the internal brain and personality development that a Montessori education provides.

We work mainly to activate brain nerve pathways and build strong brain architecture in the child. This gives the child body-mind integration, as he explores and understands his environment, producing positive self-image and a love for learning. The end result of this is that the child learns to focus attention, solve problems, think critically, control and coordinate his body, develop logic and memory skills.

These skills are worth more than your child memorizing and writing alphabets and numerals at age 1 ½ to 2 ½ years!

### References

1. B Efuniyi, The Fundamentals of Montessori 1999
2. Maria Montessori, The Secrets of Childhood
3. Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child

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