



SCHOOL HANDBOOK

CREATIVE WORLD OF MONTESSORI

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WELCOME TO THE CREATIVE WORLD OF MONTESSORI!

MONTESSORI

100+ Years of Commitment to Children

Dear Parent:

Thank you for your inquiry about Montessori. We are enclosing information for you that we hope will explain the Montessori philosophy of child development and education. Please, do not hesitate to contact us if we can clarify anything for you, or explain Montessori in greater depth.

There are presently over 5000 Montessori schools in this country. In 1958 there was one Montessori School. As you can see, more and more parents, as they learn about this method of education and its philosophy, are choosing Montessori for their children.

Children at all levels are exposed to the full range of academic subjects, including Language, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, and the Cultural subjects.

While we could tell you over and over again how our children respond so eagerly to the Montessori classroom, the best way to get a true picture of a school is to actually observe a class in progress. The Creative World of Montessori welcomes observation, and asks you to call (937) 866-2106 to schedule an observation appointment. Classes may be observed from Monday through Friday, 9:30 to 10:30 AM and 1:00 to 2:00 PM.

Should you care to read more about the philosophy, goals and methods of a Montessori education, you may find the following books helpful:

MARIA MONTESSORI: A BIOGRAPHY	Kramer, Rita
MONTESSORI: A MODERN APPROACH	Lilliard, Paula
DR. MONTESSORI'S OWN HANDBOOK	Montessori, Maria
THE ABSORBENT MIND	Montessori, Maria
MARIA MONTESSORI, HER LIFE AND WORK	Standing, E. M.

We look forward to hearing from you and hope we can welcome your child to our Montessori's Children's House.

Thank You,

CREATIVE WORLD OF MONTESSORI

CHARTER INFORMATION

Creative World of Montessori in Beavercreek is in the process of becoming a Chartered School with the Ohio Department of Education. Our Miamisburg location has already completed the charter process. We are currently operating with a Letter of Approval from the Ohio Department of Education which is the final phase prior to receiving the Charter.

The administrator and each employee of the school is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, (ORC), to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children services agency.

Custodial parents and/or legal guardians of a child enrolled in the school are permitted unlimited access to the school during operating hours. A parent of a child enrolled at the school who is not the child's residential parent shall be afforded the same rights as the residential parent unless there is court documentation limiting access and conditions of the nonresidential parent. For the safety and security of all children, all parents/guardians must inform the school's director of their presence before proceeding to their child's room.

A roster that lists parent's names and telephone numbers of the children in your child's classroom is available upon request. You may elect to be listed or deleted from this roster.

It is unlawful to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101et seq.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Creative World of Montessori is open nine and one-half months per year from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday. We offer both full and part-time program choices. For part-day programs the morning session is from 8:30-11:30 a.m. and the afternoon session is from 12:00-3:00 p.m. We will be closed a limited number of days which are listed on the school calendar. Weather delays or closings will be announced on WHIO-TV and on WHIO's website under Creative World of Montessori. On the days that the Montessori school is closed, you must be enrolled in Inspire Center for Learning in order to receive full time child care. On these days you will then be charged the full child care rate in addition to your regular Montessori tuition.

Creative World of Montessori offers a program geared to the individual child. The primary goal of the school is to foster the total development of the individual, supplementing the nurturing provided first and foremost by the parents.

The school is approved to serve children ages 3-12.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

6:30 – 8:30 AM	Before School Care (There is an additional fee for this service).
8:20 – 8:30 AM	Arrival.
8:30-9:00 AM	Group Time: Teacher directed time, including: sharing experiences, songs, finger plays, and presentation of new lessons.
9:00 – 10:30 AM	Worktime. Individualized presentations of new lessons, and individual choice activities. Our curriculum follows the guidelines of the Montessori Method of Education. Children are taught individually and in small groups of three and four, in the Montessori environment. This includes four main areas: the Practical Life area, the Sensorial area, the Math area, and the Language area. These areas include a range of academic subjects, such as, math, reading, writing, history, geography, biology, science, music, art, drama, and literature.
10:30 – 10:45 AM	Clean-up Time.
10:45 – 11:15 AM	Indoor/Outdoor Play (weather-permitting). This period emphasizes the children's development of their gross motor skills.
11:20 -11:30 AM	Dismissal for part time morning children.
11:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Lunch Period.
11:50 AM – 12:00 PM	Arrival.
12:00 – 3:00 PM	Repetition of the above schedule for children that attend the afternoon session.
3:00 – 3:10 PM	Departure
3:00 – 6:00 PM	After School Care (There is an additional fee for this service).

SCHOOL POLICIES

RACIAL NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

“The Creative World of Montessori recruits and admits students of any race, color or ethnic origin to all its rights, privileges, programs and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational programs and athletics/extracurricular activities. Furthermore, the school is not intended to be an alternative to court or administrative agency ordered, or public school district initiated desegregation.

The Creative World of Montessori will not discriminate on the basis of race, color or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel.”

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our goal is self-discipline through the development of positive and constructive behavior patterns. Discipline and guidance are approached through establishing age-appropriate limits, allowing the children to experience the natural and logical consequences of their actions, redirection of unacceptable behaviors, and time-out for considering alternative ways of behaving. Positive guidance is strongly encouraged. We begin by telling the children clearly what they may do in the school environment. We strive to build positive self-images by providing successful experiences geared to the interests and abilities of the children entrusted to our care. We will help children define and develop socially acceptable behaviors that will balance the rights of the individual child with his responsibilities as a member of a group.

At no time do we, at Creative World of Montessori, administer any kind of verbal abuse or physical punishment, nor will discipline be delegated to any child. No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child. No child shall be humiliated or subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child. Punishment will not be imposed for failure to eat or sleep or for toileting accidents. Food is used neither as a reward nor punishment in our program. When called for, verbal correction will be quiet, simple, short, and end on a positive note. Rowdy, uncontrolled behavior that could cause injury to any person, or destroy material will be put back in control by the staff person responsible for the group at that time. Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child’s age and circumstances, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a child care staff member in a safe, lighted, well-ventilated space. The school shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in the school’s care.

Any behavioral guidelines to be followed by the children in our program are to be followed by all persons, children, employees and all adults, when in the presence of children entrusted to our care.

The school staff member in charge of a child or a group of children is responsible for their discipline, and is aware of Creative World of Montessori’s guidance and discipline policy.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

Custodial parents and/or guardians are permitted unlimited access to the school during normal operating hours. For the safety and security of all children, adults should inform the school director of their presence, before proceeding to their child’s room.

Upon arrival or departure, children are to be escorted into their classrooms by a responsible adult, not dropped off or picked up in the parking lot or at the door. Adults are requested to check in with the staff person in the room upon arrival and departure. We realize that these policies

involve extra time. Please allow for this in your morning and afternoon schedule. These are safeguards for your children and do make their daily transition from home to school much easier. No child will be released to anyone other than the custodial parent unless prior notification is given to the school director. Identification of the authorized individual will be checked by one of our staff members. Creative World of Montessori will follow the latest custody agreements or court documentation on file.

Parents are requested to call the school when their child is absent. After the second consecutive day's absence, if we have not heard from you, the school director will attempt to contact the parent. If your child's absence is due to a diagnosed contagious condition you are requested to inform the school immediately. This will assist us in monitoring the other children who may have been exposed and allow us to appropriately inform other parents.

No child will ever be left alone or unsupervised.

Each child will be assigned to a primary care giver and a group.

NUTRITION

Lunch and snacks are provided. Lunch is served between 11:30 AM and 12:00 PM. Lunches include one-third of recommended daily dietary allowances, feature foods from all four basic food groups, and are developmentally appropriate for each child. Snacks are nutritious and include two food groups. If your child is on any type of special diet, we must have a statement from your child's physician on file.

PROCEDURES FOR HEALTH/SAFETY

The Health and Security of every child enrolled in the school is of utmost concern. There is a staff member trained in the management of communicable diseases, first aid, CPR, and recognition of child abuse and prevention on the premises during all hours of operation. Our facility has been designed to offer a safe environment for all age groups. However, in the care of children accidents can occur even if reasonable care and supervision is provided. Creative World of Montessori is not responsible for the costs or damages of any kind resulting from such accidents. Creative World of Montessori has evoked the following policies to reduce the risk of such accidents. By following the policies as outlined here we will all be working together to achieve the same end -- providing maximum health, safety, and security for all children.

1. No child will ever be left alone or unsupervised.
2. Staff has access to a working telephone, located in the classroom, for emergencies only.
3. Monthly fire drills will be held. A record of these drills will be maintained. Staff members are familiar with the fire emergency and weather disaster plan posted in the classroom.
4. Aerosol sprays will not be used in the presence of children.
5. The school shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of a child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.
6. In the event the school would need to evacuate its facility, the name and phone number of the evacuation site would be posted on the door. The attendance sheets and the children's medical history, emergency authorization to transport and emergency contact information will accompany the children.

Below are the procedures for dealing with an illness or accident:

1. In event of illness or accident staff will immediately notify the director or designated person in charge. While attending a sick or injured child, the staff will make sure other children in group are not unsupervised.
2. A staff person will observe each child before he enters a group and report any suspected illness or communicable disease to the director. If indicated, the child will be isolated within sight and hearing of an adult. Parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately. Re-admittance to the school will be determined by the nature of the illness and according to the communicable disease chart. The school reserves the right to request a doctor's statement to readmit a child after a contagious illness.
3. If signs of suspected child abuse are present the staff will immediately notify the director and our corporate headquarters. As teachers, we are required by law, to report all suspected cases of child abuse.
4. The first aid kit and current version of the JFS 08077 communicable disease chart are located in the teachers' break room.
5. No medication or special diet will be administered without written consent from parent or physician on the prescribed state form.
6. All medication will be stored out of reach of children. Medication requiring refrigeration will be stored separate from food items.
7. Parent's work phone numbers, other emergency contacts are on file near the phone, in the classroom.
8. If there is a serious emergency, the rescue squad and parents will be called immediately by the director or person in charge.
9. The children's medical history and emergency authorization to transport are located in the office file. If the child is to be removed from the school before a parent arrives, this information and a staff person will accompany the child to the hospital when possible.
10. "Serious incident, injury, or illness" includes any situation occurring while a child is in the care of the center that requires emergency medical treatment or professional consultation or transportation for emergency treatment. A detailed incident report must be completed by the child care staff member in charge of the child and given to the parent/guardian on the day of the incident when the following occur:
 - An illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid treatment
 - A bump or blow to the head
 - The administration of syrup of ipecac
 - Emergency transporting
 - An unusual or unexpected event which jeopardizes the safety of children or staff, such as, a child leaving the center unattended.
11. A child with any of the following signs or symptoms or illness shall be immediately isolated and discharged to his parent or guardian:
 - Diarrhea (more than three abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period);
 - Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face, or to make a whooping sound;
 - Difficult or rapid breathing;

- Yellowish skin or eyes;
 - Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning or itching;
 - Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by the axillary method when in combination with other sign of illness;
 - Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes;
 - Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool;
 - Stiff neck with elevated temperature;
 - Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing;
 - Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptoms of illness;
 - Evidence of lice, untreated scabies, or other untreated parasitic infestation;
12. A child with any of the signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated from other children. Decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged immediately, or at some other point during the day, shall be determined by the director and parent or guardian. The child, while isolated at the school shall be carefully watched for symptoms listed above and:
- Within sight and hearing of an adult at all times;
 - Cared for in another room or portion of a room away from other children;
 - Provided with a cot and made comfortable. After use, the cot shall be cleaned and disinfected.
13. The director will inform parents in writing by the following day of operation if their children have been exposed to a communicable disease or contagious condition.
14. Any child who is experiencing minor cold symptoms or who does not feel well enough to participate in activities will be monitored within the group and carefully observed for signs and symptoms or worsening condition.
15. All staff are trained in hand washing and disinfecting techniques as part of staff orientation.
16. Any staff exhibiting symptoms of a communicable disease or are unable to perform their duties due to illness will be replaced by a substitute.
17. Children who require the use of an inhaler or medication must have the appropriate documentation on file and all medications must be in the original containers and kept in the designated in the medication container. School age children are not be permitted to carry their own inhalers.

TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN

Creative World of Montessori periodically will arrange field trips for our children. There may be an additional fee associated with these field trips.

On trips away from the school, each child will be identified with the school's name, address and telephone number. Staff accompanying the group will be trained in first aid, CPR, and have a first aid kit available. Each child will be assigned to a staff member who will take attendance before leaving, upon arrival, periodically during and before leaving the field trip. Emergency transportation authorization and health records for each child will be taken on all trips away from the school. Prior to a field trip, parents must sign a field trip permission form in order for the child to participate in such activity.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Creative World of Montessori offers outdoor play each day in suitable weather for all children attendance four or more consecutive hours. Children can play outdoors in most types of weather if dressed appropriately. Extreme heat (above 90 degrees), cold (below 28 degrees), rain, snow, or sleet may prevent outdoor play. If the weather is unsuitable for outdoor play and internal gross motor activity will be offered. Children will not go outside during any emergency which may threaten their safety.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to be an integral part of their child's learning and school experience. Creative World of Montessori offers multiple opportunities for parent involvement including luncheons, conferences, a parent's bulletin board posted in the entry way and monthly newsletters highlighting upcoming events and activities. We encourage your participation in your child's program as much as possible. You are also encouraged to consult with the director concerning any questions or problems. We hope you will visit and observe your child growing, playing, working, and learning. We encourage your comments and suggestions which will aid us in providing for your child's individual needs.

Parents are requested to call the school when their child is absent. After the second consecutive day's absence, the director will attempt to contact the parent.

Early childhood education is a partnership between parents and staff. Parents have knowledge available from no other source. This knowledge must be utilized if the school is to function and meet the needs of the children. On the other hand, staff members have knowledge of the program and children which needs to be shared with parents. If this knowledge is not shared, the program will be weakened. If staff and parents are interacting regularly via meetings, conferences, newsletters, etc. to share their knowledge, then they will be prepared to work together to plan and implement a program which will be the most responsive to the children's needs.

A "**mini-conference**" is communication that should occur daily between teachers and parent at drop off and pick up times. It is the time to exchange factual information regarding the child. It helps smooth the transition from home to school and from school to home.

A **parent / teacher conference** is a scheduled meeting between the child's parents and his/her teachers to discuss the child's development and progress. It is a time to talk about any problems the child may be experiencing and also elaborate on the areas in which the child has experienced success. Conferences also give the teacher a chance to learn about the child's life outside of school. Conferences are most important to the child. This allows parents and teachers to plan and work together so the child can get the most out of his school experience. No less than 2 conferences will be scheduled per academic year.

The staff will compile a **monthly school newsletter** to keep parents informed and involved with their child's program. Contents will include information such as: school events, parent reminders, articles of interest regarding school issues, policy changes, safety suggestions, etc.

FEES, OVERTIME CHARGES, REGISTRATION & ENROLLMENT

Creative World of Montessori offers multiple enrollment options to meet the needs of the children and families. Tuition is adjusted March 1st of each year for the following school year.

All tuition is due in full on the last Monday of each month for the following month regardless of your child's attendance pattern. Any account not paid by the 5th day of the month will be assessed the late payment fee. The full monthly tuition is due regardless of attendance.

Holidays and weather days are already accounted for in the tuition structure. There are no makeup days or change of times, however, if you request we can accommodate additional time above your regular enrollment, this will be accommodated on an "as-space-is-available" basis. You will be billed the following Monday for the additional charges.

If you desire care during the holidays when the Montessori school is closed, you must be enrolled in Inspire Center for Learning in order to receive full time child care. On these days you will then be charged the full child care rate in addition to your regular Montessori tuition.

There is a fee for children dropped off early or picked up late of \$1.00 / minute for the 1st 15 minutes, \$5.00 / minute for each minute thereafter unless otherwise arranged.

If any account balance exceeds \$100.00 or is two (2) weeks past due, (whichever comes first), services will be discontinued and the space given to the next child on our waiting list. Account balances are subject to a 1% per month balance on all outstanding balances after 30 days. If this occurs, your account may be turned over to our collection agency. In addition, you will be fully responsible for any and all attorney's fees, court fees, or collection fees incurred by Creative World.

A one (1) week written notice of withdrawal is required. You will continue to be charged for the space until formal notification of withdrawal has been given to the director.

The School will try to help every child adjust to the School's program and behavioral expectations. However, if a child is unable to adjust, the School does have the right to disenroll at any time.

The school's tax identification number and a statement of payments made will be made available to all parents or guardians with an account in good standing upon request.

ENROLLMENT AND HEALTH RECORDS

Before a child may be enrolled all required paperwork, including all health and enrollment forms, will need to be completed in full and a current medical statement signed by your child's physician be on file at the school.

DRESS AND BEHAVIOR

Children should be dressed in comfortable, washable clothes. We try to keep the children reasonably clean, but they do get involved in paint, sand, water, etc. Sometimes they do get messy. For this reason an extra change of clothing (all labeled with your child's name.) should be kept on hand at all times.

For the children's safety they should wear rubber soled, closed toed shoes.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

We do take pictures and videos of our children as part of our program. These pictures/video may be displayed in the building or in other Creative World materials including but not limited to marketing or advertising literature.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

Welcome Parents and Friends,

We are pleased that you are taking the time to observe our classroom. We hope that you will find your visit interesting and enjoyable. When observing, see the whole, catch the mood; then, concentrate your attention on one child or a group of children.

Here are some simple rules:

1. Please be seated in the location designated by the teacher and remain there during your observation.
2. Responding to a child who speaks directly to you would be natural; however, should a child engage you in a conversation, a suggestion that he return to his would be sufficient. We will not expect you to call attention to yourself in any manner.
3. Observation time is only for one half hour.

We suggest that you note to following points during your observation:

A child:

- degree of independence and self-confidence
- succession of different activities
- movement (control and coordination)
- spontaneity and enthusiasm
- time between activities (socialization, wandering, day-dreaming, watching others work, etc.)

A Small Group of Children:

- formation (child-initiated, teacher-initiated)
- activity (learning experience and/or socialization)
- structure (pattern of leadership and response)
- conclusion of group activity (how? why?)

Apparatus:

- how is it chosen (self-initiated, teacher-initiated, peer-initiated)
- how is it used (duration and frequency, adaptability)

Environment:

- how is it chosen (self-initiated, teacher-initiated, peer-initiated)
- use of color and form to provide harmony and stimulation
- child's recognition of logical arrangement of materials

Teacher

- awareness of class dynamics; potential disorder
- sensitivity to individual children
- demonstrates apparatus
- initiates work
- maintains classroom limits

If you have any questions regarding individual reactions, specific materials, or the teacher's actions, you may contact the teacher or administrator after class time.

Creative World of Montessori follows the Montessori method education.

THE ORIGINS OF MONTESSORI EDUCATION

Maria Montessori was born in 1870 in Ancona, Italy. To understand her unique method of nursery education it is important to know something of her background. The child of a progressive and ambitious family, she chose to study engineering and mathematics at a time when higher education for girls was considered unnecessary. Even more remarkably, she went on to qualify as the first woman doctor in her country's history. It is hardly surprising therefore that from such a remarkable woman came remarkable views.

Her early work with handicapped children showed her that with a special kind of help and encouragement, they were capable of learning much more than had previously been thought possible. She began to develop special learning materials to help them follow a normal academic program and enter the state school system.

The results of these early experiments were so impressive that Dr. Montessori was inspired to continue her work on a much broader basis. Her aim was to show that if her special children, working with carefully structured materials, could achieve a standard approaching the national average, then other children working with the same material could reach an even higher academic standard. However, even she did not dream that her theories would result in the discovery of an almost limitless academic potential within the average child.

In 1907, she opened her first school, in a slum area of San Lorenzo. So encouraged was she by her results here that she began to share her discoveries with others by publishing books and giving lectures: thus the Montessori method of education was born. After her death in 1952 her innovative system was also carried on by centers in Holland, the United States, Ireland, and many other parts of the world.

Dr. Maria Montessori left behind a legacy: a philosophy of life, a unique method of education, materials with which to educate, and a system of training which is capable of producing teachers who give the children the best possible foundation for life. In essence, our aim is to create better, more complete children, who can grow into men and women able to build a better world.

MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

Montessori schools are founded upon a deep respect for the individual child. Dr. Maria Montessori believed that children possess an intrinsic desire to explore, discover, and learn about their environment. Montessori schools try to help children build within themselves the foundations for a lifetime of creative learning.

Montessori educators believe in the observations and promises of Dr. Maria Montessori:

- That each child carries within him the person he will be someday.
- That each child is different — and develops and learns at his own rate.
- That “preschool years” are critical years for learning. (Leading psychologists affirm that since a child absorbs 50 percent of his mature intelligence by age four, these early years deserve very special experiences.)
- That children need sound learning experiences during the non-recoverable early years. Children should have opportunities to build positive attitudes toward themselves, and toward learning, during those years.
- That Montessori children learn how to learn; patterns established in these early years, produce confident, competent learners for life.
- That children who attend Montessori schools develop valuable personal characteristics — among them self-confidence, independence, initiative, sense of order, ability to concentrate, persistence, increased curiosity, and pride of learning. (We have watched our children unfold like flowers.)
- We believe that all of these things happen when children develop at their own pace in a joyful atmosphere that balances intellectual stimulation, creativity, and love.

The Montessori teacher/directress surrounds children with a carefully-planned, stimulating environment. The children discover materials especially designed for their readiness and maturity; they develop at their own pace in a non-competitive atmosphere. Learning is individualized, and impulse for learning is the self-motivation that exists within each child.

MONTESSORI EDUCATION

Dr. Maria Montessori's objective was to help children everywhere reach their maximum learning potential, while becoming well-balanced individuals able to cope with the emotional, social and practical pressures of modern living. Montessori education provides a range of experiences which will stimulate a child's love of learning and discovery. With the right approach children learn willingly, so the Montessori teacher is gentle, sympathetic and full of encouragement for the child. She is viewed more as a friendly helper, there to give guidance, than as a teacher to be obeyed. Her role is to encourage positive attitudes, to help create strong individuals, and to provide the stimulus and inspiration for the child to learn and progress. The essence of Montessori education is that every child is treated with respect, given freedom within the limits of a carefully structured environment, and allowed to develop naturally at his or her own pace.

The Montessori child pursues the same basic activities covered in any classroom, and is taught in a way that does not pressure him into learning, yet encourages the maximum response. He chooses from a wide range of self-educating activities to assist this process, working at each for as long as his individual attention span will ensure success. The teacher will be on hand at all times to encourage, to answer questions, and to promote a harmonious environment in which to learn.

The Montessori educational approach looks for more than retention of knowledge. It aims also to generate security, trust and independence in the child; it will prepare him to fit into any situation and to move on to primary education with confidence.

LEARNING SKILLS

In many schools direction in everyday skills, social graces, and discipline is sometimes lacking. In Montessori schools, by contrast, the child learns these social skills, as well as covering a whole range of academic subjects including mathematics, reading and writing, history and geography, science, biology, music, art, drama and literature.

Practical life exercises are also taught. These would include teaching the child how to tie a bow, lace a shoe or use a screwdriver; how to arrange flowers, care for a pet, or offer food, drink or hospitality to a friend. The Montessori teacher encourages social interaction and co-operation between children.

On an academic level, the Montessori teacher will work closely with a wide range of didactic materials, originally developed by Dr. Montessori to help children learn in a more creative and positive way. The teaching of language, for example, can be introduced at an early stage. Our system does not require the children to learn by heart at first but utilizes all the senses to help them read and write with proper understanding, to check pronunciation and to spell accurately. Indeed, the method is so effective that it is often adopted for use outside the Montessori system to help with remedial reading, particularly in dyslexia.

Montessori arithmetic is taught as early as three, by giving the child objects to hold, count, and manipulate. These help him learn the fundamentals of simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Even the basic concepts of square root can be introduced at four years old by means of a special puzzle.

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT A MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL-KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION?

- **The Absorbent Mind** — the child of this age learns by absorbing information from his environment. A Montessori classroom provides a prepared environment where the child absorbs knowledge which gives him a better foundation for later learning.
- **Freedom of Choice** — because preschool children mature at very different rates children in a Montessori environment choose materials according to their own interest and abilities. No child is ever told he is “too young” to learn something.
- **The Montessori Materials and Apparatus** — the attractive, inviting materials are all self-teaching and educational. The materials are by no means dull; the children are thirsting for knowledge and prefer to be learning something, than to be occupied without purpose. These materials can be found in any one of the four classroom areas; Practical life, Sensorial, Mathematics, and Language.
- **Sensitive Periods** — periods of intense fascination for learning a particular skill. It is easier for the child to learn a particular skill during the corresponding sensitive period than at any other time in his life. The Montessori classroom takes advantage of this fact by allowing the child freedom to select individual activities, which correspond to his own periods of interest.
- **A Non-competitive Environment** — children work individually, or in small groups, with the materials. Each child relates only to his own previous work. Self-discipline is acquired through absorption in meaningful work.
- **A Child’s Work Is Different From an Adult’s** — an adult works consciously to reach a final goal; a child works for the value of the activity itself. The adult works to perfect his environment; a child works to perfect himself. Montessori gives him the tools for his work.
- **Repetition** — the young child has a great need to repeat the activity he is learning until he is satisfied with its mastery. Montessori allows the child to work with the material as long as he wishes without interruption.
- **Social Adjustment** — A Montessori classroom is a buzzing hive of activity with much interaction among the children. By being engaged in meaningful work, the children quickly learn to respect the rights of others and to work without interruption. Discipline is usually achieved through isolation, such as having the child sit and watch while others work, as well as redirection.

By pursuing his individual interests the child gains an early enthusiasm for learning, which is the key to his becoming a truly educated person.

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED ABOUT THE MONTESSORI METHOD OF EDUCATION

1. What is the purpose of the Montessori school?

The purpose of the Montessori school is to help each child develop within himself the foundations for a lifetime of creative learning; i.e., to develop the basic ideas, attitudes, and skills essential for success in school and in life; a thirst for learning, favorable attitudes toward school, habits of concentration, of initiative, of order, of persistence, and above all clear perceptions basic to functional creativity and originality.

2. Why is it called Montessori?

The method is named after its founder, Maria Montessori. She was an Italian physician and educator, the first woman to receive a medical degree in Italy. Born in 1870, she developed a psychologically-rooted method of educating children and devoted her life to this work. She was honored and respected throughout the world at the time of her death in 1952.

3. Why did she develop her special teaching method?

Dr. Montessori developed her method because she was distressed by the rigid teaching techniques used in Europe at the time. Furthermore, she noted that the learning of many children was blocked by traditional teaching methods. Believing that the young child had more potential for self-learning than most educators realized, she began to develop this potential through a sensorial approach (teaching the young child through his natural interest in exploring the world through his senses.)

4. What is the Montessori Method?

The Montessori Method is an approach to education which emphasizes the potential of the young child (under age five), and which attempts to develop this potential by means of a prepared environment and a unique teaching strategy utilizing specially trained teachers and specifically designed learning materials and apparatus having an inherent appeal to the preschool age child.

The Montessori Method refers to a psychologically-rooted approach to assisting the child in developing self-awareness, a positive self-image and self-confidence through a program of graduated sensorial, practical-life, math, language, music, science, and art materials with accompanying tasks geared to his developmental needs. Uniquely designed materials with built-in "control of error" enable the child to discover himself, the nature and qualities of things, persons and relationships in his environment.

Montessori emphasizes the dignity of the child as a person, the necessity of recognizing individual differences, the catalytic role of the teacher, and a prepared environment designated to help each child actualize his potentialities.

Basic to all of Maria Montessori's ideas is respect for the child and for his ability to learn. She saw the child as a person of dignity with an amazing mind, unlike the adult mind in its quality and capacity. Given the opportunity and the freedom to learn from his earliest years in the right kind of environment, the child would create an adult capable of coping creatively with the problems of living.

5. What is the "absorbent mind"?

Dr. Montessori was so impressed with the learning ability of the young child that she called the mind of the child "the absorbent mind". The baby absorbs the world at the beginning,

learning unconsciously, but as he begins to move and to use his hands, he brings into his conscious mind what he has already absorbed. Dr. Montessori regarded the period from birth until age six as the most important part of the child's educational life. ("The Absorbent Mind" is also the title of one of Dr. Montessori's books.)

6. What are "sensitive periods?"

"Sensitive periods" are Dr. Montessori's name for age periods when the child shows unusual capabilities in acquiring particular skills. A modern name for this phenomenon might be "formative periods" or "periods of specific maturational aptness"...a period in which the child is psychologically attuned to learn or acquire given ideas or skills more easily than at any other period. Modern psychologists refer to "critical learning periods" and stress "developmental needs to be capitalized upon with developmental tasks." During such a period, the child focuses his attention on certain aspects of his environment to the exclusion of others. If the materials teaching basic academic skills are available to the child during the period when he is sensitive to them, he can learn these skills more easily than at a later date when the sensitive period has passed.

7. What are some examples of "sensitive periods?"

The sensitive period for writing is between 3 1/2 and 4 1/2 years of age for the average child, leading to reading and numbers at the age of 4 and 5; for precise movement and coordination, 2 1/2 to 4; for acquiring a sense of order, 2 1/2 and 3 1/2 years old, and social graces, 3 to 6.

8. What is the "prepared environment?"

From about age 2 1/2, according to Dr. Montessori, the child needs to spend time in an environment of his own where he can be an important and effective person. This is an artificial environment prepared by the teacher. Within this prepared environment, children are free to choose their own materials and activities. The child must be free to move because mental development is intimately connected with movement.

9. What is the Montessori concept of "freedom?"

Freedom is a prerequisite condition for learning. Freedom is a goal, not a starting point. A free child (or adult) is one who has developed his potential and prefers to work out problems for himself, but is capable of asking for and receiving direction when necessary. An undisciplined and unskilled child (or adult) is not free, but is a slave to his immediate desires and is excessively dependent on others (whether parent or teacher or wife or husband). The free child, of course, grows into the free adult.

10. What is the Montessori concept of discipline?

Discipline is the second prerequisite condition for learning. Montessori discipline is an "inner discipline"--an inner control which the child develops over his own behavior through working with the Montessori materials. Dr. Montessori noted that many so-called undisciplined children were really frustrated children because of a lack of proper stimulation and inadequate opportunity to achieve. She noted that they became happier and self-controlled after a period of time in a Montessori class in which they experienced challenging tasks absorbing their energies and resulting in a sense of achievement.

11. What is the Montessori concept of the "child's work?"

The child wants to learn, and given the freedom and opportunity within a prepared environment he will concentrate with intensity and for longer periods than is commonly thought possible in young children. The child does not work to complete a job, but for the activity involved in doing the job. Children in Montessori classes commonly work purposefully at different tasks for as long as two hours.

12. When was it introduced in the United States?

Montessori education was introduced to this country in 1912, with one of the early schools being established by Alexander Graham Bell in his own home. After an initially enthusiastic reception, interest in the Montessori approach soon waned as the dominant emphasis of education shifted from the development of intellectual skills to life adjustment, and from the need for limits in the classroom to permissiveness. This was not typical of the response to Montessori education in other parts of the world where it continued to flourish. The Montessori approach was reintroduced in the United States by Nancy McCormick Rambush in 1953; and, principally because of the changes in the psychological and educational climate, there has followed a tremendous resurgence of interest in this method of teaching. There are now over 5000 Montessori schools in this country.

13. Is it oriented to a particular religion?

Montessori is not associated with a particular religious persuasion. Schools have been sponsored by groups representing nonsectarian interest as well as Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, and Hindu faiths.

14. Is the child free to do what he chooses in the classroom?

The child is free to move about the classroom at will, to talk to other children, to work with any equipment whose purpose he understands, or to ask the teacher to introduce new material to him. He is not free to disturb other children at work or to abuse the equipment that is so important to his development.

15. What does the teacher do?

The teacher is working with individual children, introducing materials, and giving guidance where needed. One of her primary tasks is careful observation of each child in order to determine his needs and to gain the knowledge she needs in preparing the environment to aid his growth. Her method of teaching is indirect in that she neither imposes upon the child in direct teaching nor abandons him as in a non-directive permissive approach. Rather, she is constantly alert to the direction in which the child himself has indicated he wishes to go, and she actively seeks ways to help him accomplish his goals.

16. Is it for all children?

The Montessori system has been used successfully with children between ages 2 1/2 and 18 from all socio-economic levels, representing those in regular classes as well as the gifted, those with retardation, the emotionally disturbed and the physically handicapped. Because of its individual approach, it is uniquely suited to public education, where children of many backgrounds are grouped together. It is also appropriate for classes in which the student-teacher ratio is high because children learn at an early age to work independently.

17. At what age should a child enter a Montessori school?

Between 1 1/2 and 2 1/2 years old for an infant class; and between 2 1/2 and 3 1/2 for the regular pre-primary class (3-6).

18. What happens to children who transfer from a Montessori School to a public or parochial school?

As a rule, the children from a Montessori school, covering ages 3 to 6 years old, go directly to first grade. Most children appear to adjust readily to new classroom situations. In all likelihood this is because they have developed a high degree of self-discipline and independence in the Montessori environment, and because of the adaptability of young children in general.

“A positive learning climate in a school for young children is a composite of many things. It is an attitude that respects children. It is a place where children receive guidance and encouragement from the responsible adults around them. It is an environment where children can experiment and try out new ideas without fear of failure. It is an atmosphere that builds children’s self-confidence so they dare to take risks. It is an environment that nurtures a love of learning.”

Carol B. Hillman (20th century), U.S. early childhood educator. Creating a Learning Climate for the Early Childhood Years, Fastback Series (1989).

Thank you for allowing us the privilege of sharing in your child’s education.