

**The Montessori Learning Centre Inc**  
**Program Statement**  
**2019-2020**

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# **The Montessori Learning Center Inc**

## ***Program Statement***

**Program Goal:** To teach the children to be independent and develop inner-discipline. The teacher's role is to observe and guide the learning without interrupting; when this is done, the children become independent learners – mastering skills, sounds, and numbers. They become active participants, and purposeful learners.

### **The Montessori Method is defined by:**

- Deep respect for children as individuals
- Multiage classes allow teachers to develop close and long-term relationships with their students, allow them to know each other's learning style well, and encourage older students to become role models, mentors, and leaders to younger students
- Integrated curriculum, which is carefully structured and connects subjects within programs (e.g., history and cultural arts maximize the opportunity for learning and builds from program to program, to progress from concrete to abstract learning.)
- Independence is nurtured and leads to children becoming purposeful, motivated, and confident in their own abilities
- Peace and conflict resolution are taught daily and children learn to be part of a warm, respectful, and supportive community
- The child creates, in a very real sense, the adult that is to be, through his/her experiences, interactions, and environments. Character development is a central focus of the Montessori curriculum.
- Hands-on learning is central to the curriculum in all programs and leads to children being engaged rather than passive with their work.
- The environments are responsibly and carefully prepared with multisensory, sequential, and self-correcting materials to support self-directed learning.
- Teachers, children, and parents work together as a warm and supportive community
- Self-expression is nurtured in all children. Children experience art, music, poetry, theatre, writing, and other forms of creative arts with confidence and passion.

### **Some Important Qualities of the Montessori Method**

1. It is based on years of patient observation and study of children by Dr. Maria Montessori, who was a scientist uniquely educated and qualified for this task. She was a medical doctor, a student of psychology, a professor of anthropology, a science that is concerned with man in a unique way. She worked out her methods and developed the materials by letting the children show what worked and what did not work. It is not a "franchise" or "patented" operation. It is in the public domain. There are responsible organizations (such as the American Montessori Society) that operate on behalf of its proper development in this country.

2. It has proved itself of universal application. Within a single generation, it has been tried successfully with children of many nations. Climate, nationality, religious beliefs, social rank, or type of civilization makes no difference to its successful application. India, France, Holland, England, Burma Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Canada, Italy, Australia, and the United States have many well-developed Montessori schools.
3. It has been revealed the small child is a lover of order and of intellectual work, spontaneously chosen and carried out with profound joy, capable of concentration and eager to learn for the joy of learning.
4. It is based upon the child's imperious need to learn by doing activities, which develop their faculties at each stage in their mental growth. These stages are called "sensitive periods," and the children more readily absorb knowledge during those periods. While the method offers the child a maximum of spontaneity, it enables them to reach an even higher level of scholastic attainment than under other systems.
5. Though it does away with the necessity of coercion by means of rewards and punishments, it achieves a higher discipline. It is an active discipline, which originates within the child and is achieved through concentrations on work, which they have chosen. Children with extremely active and curious minds are stimulated and utilize their intellectual energies constructively.
6. It is based on a profound respect for the child's personality and removes from them the preponderate influence of the adult, thus leaving them room to grow in biological independence. The child is allowed a large measure of liberty (not license) and they learn to handle it with responsibility.
7. It enables the teacher to deal with each child individually in each subject and thus guide the child according to his or her individual requirements. Each child works at their own pace, hence the quick child is not held back by the slow, nor is the latter, in trying to keep up with the former, obliged to flounder along hopelessly out of his or her depth. Each stone in the mental edifice is "well and truly laid" before the next is added.
8. It does away with pressure and it's trail of challenges. More than this, at every turn it presents endless opportunities among the children for mutual help, which is joyfully given and gratefully received. Since the child works from his own free choice, without pressure and coercion, he or she is freed from strain, feeling inferior, and other experiences, which are apt to be the unconscious cause of mental disturbances in later life.
9. The Montessori Method develops the whole personality of the child, not merely his intellectual faculties but also his or her powers of deliberation, initiative, and independent choice, with their emotional complements. By living as a free member in a real social community, the child is trained in those fundamental social qualities, which form the basis of good citizenship.

## **Desired Learning Outcomes Common to Montessori Education**

Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian Physician and educator, developed a method of teaching based on her scientific observation of young children's behaviour. Her first "Children's House" was established in Rome in 1907. She found children learned best in a homelike environment filled with developmentally appropriate materials that provide experiences, which contribute to the growth of self-motivated, independent learners.



The outcomes we aspire to teach are lifelong developments. The original Montessori agenda of learner outcomes are as follows:

- Independence
- Confidences and Competence
- Intrinsic Motivation
- Respect External Authority
- Social Responsibility
- Academic Preparation
- Spiritual Awareness
- Citizens of the World

## **Professional Conduct**

### Guides in Speech

Teachers will always:

1. State suggestions or directions in a positive form.
2. Give the child a choice when leaving the decision up to the child.
3. Use their voice as a teaching tool.
4. Avoid trying to change behaviour by methods that may lead to loss of self-respect, such as shaming or labeling behaviour with a judgment.
5. Avoid motivating a child by making comparison between one child and another or by encouraging competition.
6. Use redirection which is most effective when consistent with the child's motives or interests.
7. Remember effectiveness of a suggestion may depend largely on its timing.

### Guides in Action

Teacher will always:

1. Give the child the minimum of help in order that he or she may have the maximum chance to grow in independence.
2. Make suggestions effective by reinforcing them when necessary
3. Foresee and prevent
4. Define limits clearly and consistently
5. Use the most strategic positions for supervising
6. Make the health and safety of the children the primary concern

### Approach to Discipline

Teachers will always:

1. Suggest alternative activities.
2. Persistent misbehaviour in a group setting may be dealt with by temporary removal from the group, but remain in the classroom. Behaviour expectations are made clear and the child is asked if he/she is ready to return to the group.
3. Talk with the child who constantly seems to be in need of discipline; explore ways of making life more pleasant. Problem-solving skills are reinforced as well as suggestions for alternative behaviour choices.
4. Teach the child that emotions are real and valid, and how to deal with them in constructive ways with kind words rather than physical responses.
5. Notify parents, if behaviour persists, and joint action will be taken. The Principal will be notified of persistent, inappropriate behaviour and will make.

recommendations to the parents in regards to outside referrals and additional behaviour management programs.

6. Work with the Principal, who will make suggestions regarding alternative schools that may better meet the needs of the child, as necessary.

**Under no circumstances shall any child be subjected to: corporal punishment in any manner upon the body, or verbal abuse.**

Children are encouraged to express their feelings and opinions in a non-judgmental atmosphere, and adults use active listening and empathetic understanding to help interpret a situation with those involved. The teacher sets the tone for bringing the child into harmony by avoiding harsh words, bribes, and generalizations. As children feel accepted for who they are and what they feel, they develop positive self-esteem. The happier children are with themselves, the more likely they are to reach out and interact cooperatively with others.

## **Montessori Discipline Approach**

*"I was often asked, but how did you make these tinies behave so well?*

*How do you teach them such discipline?*

*It was not I.*

*It was the environment we has prepared so carefully and the freedom they found in it, under these conditions qualities formerly unknown in children 3-6 were able to show themselves."*

The Montessori discipline approach is about maintaining the perfect balance between freedom and structure. Maintaining the delicate balance can be very difficult, but it is one of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of the environment. It is in this foundation of structure and freedom that the child builds inner-discipline. Inner-discipline is something that develops and evolves over time. It is the job of the teacher to assist the child to develop the control they need to choose the right behavior, not because they are being told, but because it is the right thing to do for themselves and their community (intrinsic motivation). We know this level of discipline has been reached when the children are able to make appropriate choices even when the teacher is not present.

The Montessori approach is very gentle and respectful. One should never use harsh words, or aggressive directions. Gentle direction will help to instill knowledge of what is expected in a non-threatening way. The children will look to the teacher as a guide and role model as to how they should act and communicate appropriately. Role modeling exactly the kind of behaviors that is expected of the children is vital to the development of the inner-discipline.

### Group Circle Discussions

One important aspect of the Montessori approach is that the children are learning to take responsibility not only for themselves, but also for their environment. Group circle discussions are one way the teacher facilitates a healthy discussion of positive or negative choices being made within the classroom. This way the children and teachers can talk openly about their feelings and the impacts one or many children's choices has on the entire class. The discussion can focus on negative choices that need to be

addressed, or positive milestones that have been mastered. Having child model positive behaviours is a great way for the other children to fully understand what is expected of them. For example, if a student mastered an activity or task, they are encouraged to show them how they mastered the skill. This will motivate other children to study hard to master skills so they too can be independent and share their skills with the other

### Peace Corner

The Peace Corner is a quiet area in the classroom that is designated by a comfortable floor pillow or seat for one child to take time for themselves to attain peace. Sometimes children can be over stimulated or not able to work respectfully in the classroom setting and it may be necessary for them to take time to gain inner-peace before returning to the group. The teacher's role at this time is to first inform the child that they are disrupting others and/or placing themselves/others in danger, and if they continue, they will be asked to take time to gain peace at the Peace Corner. If the child continues with this behavior they will be asked to please take time for peace, and wait for the teacher to return to have a discussion about their choices.

## **Inclusion Policy**

### Inclusion Statement

We accept and welcome children of all abilities and acknowledge that every child is unique. We value every child's individuality. The Montessori Method believes in following the child; this allows us to create and foster a supportive environment for every child's individual growth and development. We believe children deserve an environment and experiences that promote healthy, meaningful relationships with one another and the world we live in. We value and work hand-in-hand with parents, and families to create the best learning environment for each child. We believe strongly that every child deserves the very best support on their path to life-long learning, and we are here to help them reach their fullest potential.

### What is inclusion?

Inclusion means children of all abilities have equal access to and participate meaningfully in childcare programs. When children are together as part of the group, their development is enhanced and positive social attitudes are fostered.

### Benefits of Inclusion

When the children are meaningfully included, everyone benefits. Children benefit from the following:

- Better understanding and appreciation of individual differences
- Acceptance and respect for and from others
- Learning with and from one another
- More opportunities and socialization with peers
- Preparation for full participation in the community, including the transition to school

Families benefit from the following:

- Access to child care
- Ability to go to school and get or keep a job
- Better understanding and appreciation of individual differences
- Learning with and from other families and professionals in the field of early childhood

Childcare staff benefit from the following:

- Better understanding and appreciation of individual differences
- Learning with and from all of the children and adults
- Strengthening skills by working with a variety of abilities

### Principles of Inclusion

The principles of inclusion are: access, participation, and support.

#### *Access:*

Children of all abilities are welcomed and accepted into the program. Additional supports are identified early in the registration process so that we can be sure to meet any development and physical needs. We maintain a close working relationship with the Resource Consultant so that we can ensure all of our students' needs are being met, new strategies are always being implemented and variety of resources are utilized. The program is always being assessed so that we can ensure the evolving needs of our students are being met. We observe the children closely so that we understand and meet their needs, such as shortening planned activities when needed so that all children can be successful. We arrange and set up activities so that they are accessible to every child.

#### *Participation:*

We provide developmentally appropriate group experiences for all of our students to attend. We believe that each child deserves an environment and experiences that are right for them and promote a risk-free, stimulating environment that allows growth in all areas of his or her development. An array of opportunities are provided, as well the classroom is set-in a way to promote the development of meaningful social relationships with one another. We maintain a constant level of observation to ensure we are providing appropriate activities and experiences for all children to grow and develop at their own pace. A private space, Peace Corner, is provided and accessible for all children to use when they feel they need time alone.

#### *Support:*

We make a point to speak to each family every single day. We share information about the child's interests, socializations, intellectual milestones, and overall progress. We make family/parent meetings accessible and we always try to work around the family's schedule. We work with parents and early intervention professionals who have valuable knowledge and expertise, such as the resource consultants, to share information and strategies with one another to benefit the growth and learning of all children. The desires of the family, the needs, abilities, and interests of the child and knowledge of the professionals are used to create individual program plans when necessary. We are committed to learning and expanding our knowledge of various disabilities and full inclusion to better meet the needs of all our students.

## District of Nipissing Inclusion Support Program

We are working together with community partners, The Resource Teacher Programs of The Stepping Stone Program based out of West Nipissing, to offer the best support possible to our students. The goal of the Inclusion Support Program is to provide services that will optimize inclusion practices for all children attending licensed early learning child care and approved recreation programs.

The Guiding Principles of Inclusion are:

- All children are valued as individual with unique interests and strengths;
- All children have a right to a quality program with opportunities to develop skills;
- All children benefits from child care and/or approved recreation programs in partnership with families;
- All children have a right to full memberships;
- All children will have an opportunity to build relationships

The objectives of the inclusion Support Model are:

- To assist and facilitate the adoption of a philosophy and culture of inclusion in all Nipissing District Early Learning and Child Care and approved recreation programs;
- To increase the capacity of ELCC and approved recreation program staff in identifying and implementing best practices/strategies for inclusion and developmentally appropriate practice for all children;
- To provide consistency in the delivery of service and a high level of quality assurance

As part of Inclusion Support Program a Resource Consultant will be assigned to each centre. Their role is to provide consultation to licensed child care or approved recreated program staff, and support participation of ALL children in the program. The Resource Consultant works within the Early Learning and Child Care or approved recreation program:

- Conducting regular program visits with follow as required
- Consulting with program and community partner staff to increase overall knowledge and expertise
- Completing consultations and strategies with parent/guardian, other professionals and program staff in order to address group and/or individual needs
- Interacting, modeling, and coaching program staff and children in the program
- Supporting program staff in completing developmental screenings for all children
- Observing the environment and working as a team with program staff to develop and document recommendations
- Providing information and resources on child development
- Assisting the program in connecting with other specialized services and agencies
- Developing program plans as a team for children experiencing challenges
- Assisting program staff with school readiness planning

Should you require additional information on the services offered by the District of Nipissing Inclusion Program, please do not hesitate to discuss your needs with the

program supervisor/staff or Resource Consultant. The staff and/or Resource Consultant of your child's early learning program will share information with you regarding your child's development.

## **Parents and Families Participation**

Parents and families play such an essential role in the child's growth, development, and learning. Open-communication is encouraged between the parents, teachers, and children. Two ways communication is achieved through written dialogue, is through the extensive and thorough progress reports, and the monthly-distributed newsletters.

Formal communication, such as parent-teacher interviews and case-conferences, are planned throughout the school year for parents to meet the teacher and hear how their child is progressing through the program. Informal communication, such as the Christmas Open House, Mother's/Father's Day outings, Graduation, and other field trips, are planned with the hopes the parents and families will participate and play an active role in their child's learning endeavors and have open dialogue about their child(ren)'s learning. On a daily basis, parents are encouraged to check in with the teacher's with any questions or concerns, or to simply get an up-date with what the children are learning or how their doing.

Parents are also encouraged to contribute to the children's learning by volunteering to share some of their skills or culture. Some examples from past years are having some parents who were police officers, doctors, dentist, and dancers come and do presentations for the children. Other examples are of parents who had immigrated to Canada and shared some of the authentic clothing, activities, and food with the children.

## **Community Partners**

In order for the students to have all their needs met, it is sometimes necessary to utilize community resources. Some of the resources frequented by the children are Resource teachers through The Stepping Stone Program. From One Kids Place, students have received support in Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy. There are some students who receive support from Infant and Child Development specialists at Hands.

The Montessori Learning Centre staff recognizes the importance of these valuable community supports and makes the utmost effort to provide a private space for the specialist to work one-on-one with the child or makes them feel welcome to join the group. With permission from the parent, information can be shared with the specialist regarding progress. There is a strong emphasis on collaboration, inter-dependence, and of course maintaining a child-centered focus.

## **Staff Professional Development**

To ensure the staff continues to grow and develop in their role as educational facilitators for the children at the Montessori Learning Centre, they attend yearly Professional Development conferences, which focus on specific Montessori curriculum

and practices. The conferences provide the teachers with an abundance of knowledge and resources to bring back into the classroom.

The teachers complete First Aid and CPR refresher courses every three years. On a yearly basis, the teachers complete Health and Safety training, and refresher courses on administering Epi-Pens.

## **Nutritional Considerations**

The Montessori Learning Centre takes great care to ensure the children are tended to holistically. Part of that, is ensuring the children are offered healthy, inviting meals and snacks. The children help to prepare snack and lunch whenever possible. This teaches children how to prepare food, but also highlights the importance of having the different foods from each food group. Prior to eating, the children partake in a discussion about what food groups are present in their meals.

Due to the increase in food allergies and dietary preferences, there are many food alternatives offered for lunch and snacks. It is a priority that all children are being offered healthy and appealing meals. It is so important, despite allergies and dietary preferences. Great consideration is taken to make everyone feel included during meal time.

## **Indoor/Outdoor Learning Environments**

The outdoor space is such a valuable learning environment. The playground is a fantastic place where children develop and refine their gross-motor skills, and their social skills. It's a place where they learn to problem solve and how to be a good friend. The teacher's are there to teach the children how to problem solve, but to encourage the children to speak for themselves and to share their feelings with one another. Just as in the classroom, the children are encouraged to be active participants in their learning – to be curious and ask questions about the world around them. Teachers pay close attention to the children's interactions and take advantage of teachable moments and use their observations to incorporate the children's outdoor learning and inquiries into the classroom.

The greenhouse is a very functional and engaging outdoor learning space during the spring and summer. The children become active contributors in caring for plants in the greenhouse, playground planter box, and flowerbeds around the school. The children love to be hands-on and study botany, and learn how to really care for all things living.

The Montessori materials are so efficient that they work to bridge the outdoor and indoor learning environments. Much of what the students experience outdoors can be studied closer using Montessori learning materials, most often from the botany, zoology, and science activities. The students love learning in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments and the teacher's take advantage of any opportunity to allow the children to work independently or in groups to heighten their learning experience.



Field trips are another way the students get to learn in an indoor/outdoor environment. Many of the trips involve outdoor spaces, such as the Boards Honey Bee Farm, Leisure Farms, and Champlain Park. Other trips that take place indoors, are weekly Gymtrix visits, Mother's/Father's Day outing (involving a local restaurants), and Capital Centre. The students practice taking a school bus for most of these excursions, and practice appropriate theatre and restaurant etiquette, along with life skills such as walking safety and felid trip safety. Overall, they get to experience meaningful learning opportunities within the school environment and within their community.

## Physical Activity

There are plenty of opportunities for physical activity within the Montessori program. Every week the children do gymnastics at Gymtrix. They are grouped based on ability and development, ensuring each child can take full advantage of the gymnastic program and equipment. Other experiences that promote physical activity are the dance classes. The dance instructor comes to the school. The children are grouped within their respective classes for the dance classes, and spend the year preparing a dance presentation for the year-end Graduation.

Yoga is another opportunity for the children to build their gross-motor skills and foster emotional and spiritual development. Miss. Vera specializes in teaching Kripalu yoga to children. She spends time weekly with each group to teach them how to relax their body, breathe deeply, and perform different yoga poses. A lot of the poses are familiar animals and objects so the children can really identify with what they are doing. The children prepare a yoga presentation for the Christmas Concert and Graduation.



## Opportunities for Quiet

Quiet is very important to the children's learning in the Montessori environment. The children start their day with quiet meditation. They are taught how to sit in a peaceful yoga pose and relaxing music is played for them to sway their body to the music, allowing them to become completely relaxed and rejuvenated to start the day.

During work time, the children need to have a reasonable noise level in order to study hard and master skills. They are encouraged to work quietly during independent work, but are given opportunity for group, pair, and circle discussions; this teaches children to respect the learning environment so that everyone can focus on their activity, and so that they all have the opportunity to work undisturbed.

Quiet/nap time is provided for children who need a rest, or sleep in the afternoon. The children work very hard, so it is valuable for them to take time to rest their body. One classroom is designated for this time. Relaxing music is played, and for children who request, their back can be rubbed to help calm their body. Most children out-grow the need for this quiet time around the age of 4, but the option is always there for the children, as needed. The children relax on a mat with a blanket and pillow. They can also choose to bring a stuffed toy to hug if that helps them to relax.

## Montessori Curriculum

### Prepared Environment

*"...the child must learn by his own individual activity, being given a mental freedom to take what he needs, and not to be questioned in his choice. Our teaching must only answer the mental needs of the child, never dictate them. Just as a small child cannot be still because he is in need of co-ordinating his movements, so the older child, who may seem troublesome in his curiosity over the why, what and wherefore of everything he sees, is building up his mind by this mental activity, and must be given a wide field of culture on which to feed." ~Maria Montessori - To Educate the Human Potential, p. 4/5*

The Montessori prepared environment is organized in a way to promote the highest levels of independent learning and allow safe, functional exploration. The child should experience a blend of freedom and discipline so as to develop and acquire their own inner physical, mental, and spiritual direction. The children's exploration, play, and inquiry are supported to foster curiosity, independence, and leadership skills. The children's 'play' is referred to as 'work,' so to place value on their studies and tasks. The focus of the prepared environment is to ensure that it is always child-centered. The classroom is a "living" space for the child, which is arranged, organized, and proportioned to suite the child's needs. There are to be a variety of activities that are interdisciplinary and interactive. Through consistent observation, documentation, and review the teachers ensure the classroom has challenging and stimulating activities at all times, that meet the interests and developmental milestones of the children.

Beauty is an important facet of the prepared environment. Children respond best to well ordered, quality, and visually appealing materials. Everything in the classroom can be experienced with most of their senses. The classroom is tidy, and most activities are colour-coordinated to help with organization.

Children's interaction with each other and the teachers plays an essential role in the prepared environment. Children are encouraged to learn ways of interacting in a peaceful manner. To inspire children to develop into productive, respectful people of the world, the children learn how to take responsibility for themselves and each other, by having a safe, nurturing, and caring environment that they actively care for, explore and enjoy.

In the Montessori environment, all activities are called "work". The word "work" is meant to convey the positive connotations associated with enjoyable activities in which the child takes pride in. It is imperative, that both at school and at home, adults demonstrate pleasure in their work and maintain clean and attractive environments. As teachers and parents we must consistently foster a joyful respect for all types of work and encourage it to be done well. Children must be taught that it is important to work, for themselves and for others.

One important characteristic of the Montessori prepared environment is that when children work on the floor, they work on a "working mat." This promotes order and care for their classroom and materials they are working with. This also teaches other children to respect each other's workspace. The children take great pride in their workspace, and after they are complete, they take great care in skillfully rolling up and returning their working mat.

Cleaning is a social activity that is taken seriously in the Montessori Classroom. Children learn to set tables, clean dishes and cutlery, sweep the floors and dusting. The children will learn to care for and take pride in their own environment. They become responsible for their own "Community".

## **Normalization**

**The term "Normalization" has a special significance to Montessori educators that is sometimes misunderstood by others. When we speak of normalization, we do so within the context of our approach to education that is designed to help children develop independent, self-directed learning through engaging, hands-on activity. Some people however, assume that references to normalization imply that non-Montessori children and classrooms are somehow not normal. Remember to use Montessori 'jargon' judiciously so that misconceptions about our approach to education are not proliferated.**

Dr. Montessori encourages us not to give up. We are to persevere and maintain faith that each of our students will begin to concentrate when they find an activity that attracts their attention. When facing the challenge of establishing normalization, continue alternating short independent work periods with group lessons, stories, songs, finger plays and group snack time. A group lesson commands the children's attention by satisfying their need for order and festering a social purpose.

Individual Montessori Lessons enable the children to find meaningful activity that sustains their interests and enables them to work alongside their peers. The children end up creating what is essentially a classroom that provides the correct balance between freedom and structure. It emphasizes individual choice and responsibility.

### **Corrective Group Lessons**

An effective remedy that will help your students learn to manage in the classroom is the corrective group lesson. Troublesome actions include stepping on work rugs, putting materials away incorrectly, moving too quickly through the classroom, touching someone else's work, interrupting or misusing materials can be reduced by reviewing correct procedures when necessary. Corrective group lessons are best undertaken at the end of an independent work period. When a work period ends, gather your students together and take a look around at the shelves with your students to see if anything is missing or misplaced. Demonstrate correct, consistent procedures from the very beginning of the school year. When undertaking corrective group lessons with a certain degree of dramatic flair this will make a lasting impression on the students.

### **Uninterrupted Work Cycle**

The Uninterrupted Work Cycle is a three-hour span of time for the children to work without interruption. The teachers show that they value the children's work time by allowing them to complete their activities from start to finish without interruption. This establishes an understanding that their work and time is valuable and that when working through tasks, quality is much more important than quantity. The cycle helps to reinforce concentration and encourages a sense of appreciation and achievement upon finishing their work. Dr. Montessori stresses the importance of the uninterrupted work cycle:

***"(W)hen the cycle is completed, the child detaches himself from his internal concentration; refreshed and satisfied."*** ~Maria Montessori, *The Advanced Montessori Method, Volume 1*

***"The interruption of cycles of activity produces certain inner conditions of the mind of the child, which deprive him of self-confidence and neutralize his ability to finish what he has started. When a child is continuously interrupted while fulfilling cycles of activity, the child is gradually losing the courage, the constancy and the determination necessary for achievement."*** ~Montessori, *What you Should Know About Your Child*

### **Mixed Ages**

Another important aspect to the Montessori prepared environment is to have mixed ages. It is very important for the children to share their learning with others and find ways of communicating and defining activities. There are many benefits to this type of setting. Dr. Montessori stated:



***"What matters is to mix the ages. Our schools show that children of different ages help one another. The younger ones see what the older ones are doing and ask for explanations. These are readily given, and the instruction is really valuable, for the mind of a five year old is so much nearer than ours to the mind of a child of three, that the little one learns easily what we should find it hard to impart. There is a communication and a harmony between the two that one seldom finds between the adult and the small child." ~Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind***



## Practical Life Activities

**Direct purpose:** to assist the child in developing social skills and personal independence

**Indirect purpose:** to develop the child's gross and fine motor development, including body, intellect, and will

**Acquired Skills:** concentration, sense of order, pride in work, responsibility, independence, respect, gross and fine motor movement

### **Practical Life Materials lead to:**

1. Construction and integration of the child's personality through their freedom of choice, and through the variety of their choices. Freedom of choice is necessary for the healthy development of the will.
2. Spontaneous purposeful activity that is only possible when children are allowed to exercise their curiosity through repetition. It is only through repetition that abstraction is possible. This abstraction brings about a feeling of completion for the growing child.
3. Development of co-ordination of movement. The child thinks of the activity, brings them to the activity and then does the activity.
4. Development of the physical, mental, and

### **Description:**

Children are naturally preparing to become adults. When children are given the opportunity to develop skills they will later need to accomplish adult activities, they acquire a great sense of pride in their independence, belief in themselves and their abilities, and self-discipline to help them achieve life-long success.

When children are allowed to accomplish what they consider adult activities, they learn that their contributions are valuable, which naturally leads to an increase in independence and self-esteem.

In earlier years, Practical Life skills really focus on things such as organizing and cleaning. In later years, practical life skills will become more elaborate and will include activities such as cooking and cross-stitching. The activities are organized from simple to complex.

Children are passionately interested in Practical Life Activities because the activities respond to all the **Sensitive Periods** (important periods of childhood development). Practical life activities build a foundation on which the children will grow and carry over into the other areas of the classroom, and over in to their everyday life. The Montessori Practical Life exercises respond to the need for:

- **Order:** of activities (sequences, routine, hierarchy, a cycle or full rotation of an activity).
- **Movement:** all practical life activities involve great movements that varied and attractive. The variety of movements helps the child's self-awareness within the environment and increases the child's acquisition of intelligent movement.
- **Sensorial Exploration:** sights, sounds, smells and eventually language.
- **Needs and tendencies:** are responded to help the children adapt so that they

- can actively participate and grow within their environment.
- **A child's love of work:** practical life activities feed their natural desire to work and play an active role in their environment.

Practical Life activities provide a link between home and school. Many Practical Life activities are tasks that the child will see done on a daily basis at their home, which can be helpful for their transition to school.

All Practical Life activities are intended to be useful, promote purpose, and encourage calmness. Although most activities appear to be simple and repetitive, there is so much more being accomplished. The activities are very simple and repetitive, but as a child simply watering a plant or pouring coloured water in fact is accomplishing much more.

When observing a child perform such activities you would notice:

- A high level of concentration.
- A developing sense of order (putting materials back where they belong).
- Pride in their work.
- Taking responsibility for any necessary clean up.
- An increasing sense of independence through care for themselves and their environment.

The fact that Practical Life activities practice tasks that care for their environment, the child will naturally develop a sense of responsibility and take pride in their environment. The Practical Life activities lead to success not only in the Montessori environment, but will lead to life-long success.

### **Categories of Practical Life Skills**

1. Preliminary Activities (ie. how to roll a mat, how to close the door)
2. Care and Respect for Self (ie. washing hands, tying shoelaces)
3. Care and Respect for the Environment (ie. sweeping floors, watering plants)
4. Social Graces and Courtesies (ie. shaking hands, saying please and thankyou)
5. Fine Motor Skills (ie. hand-eye coordination, refined fine motor skills)
6. Life Skills (ie. cooking)

### **Introducing the Practical Life Activities**

Practical Life Activities are introduced in the following manner:

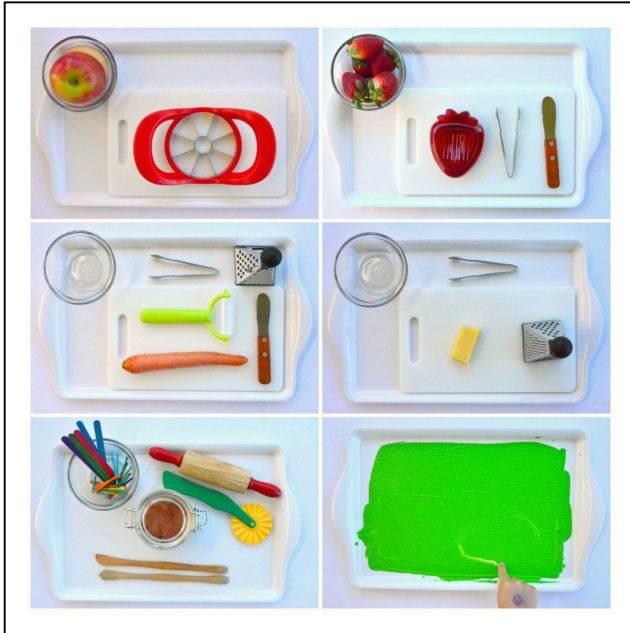
- Introduce the material to the child at the shelf.
- Show the child how to carefully carry the activity to a table or their working mat.
- Demonstrate the activity in silence, or with a minimum of words
- Your movements should be very slow and deliberate
- Leave the child to repeat the activity
- If necessary remind the child that they are responsible for tidying the activity for the next child, and returning it to the shelf where it belongs.

There are three types of presentations we use to introduce children to Practical Life Activities:

1. Collective: This is given to all children at one time, usually during circle time (table manners, how to interrupt someone and how to speak with an “inside” voice).
2. Group: This is given to a small group of children (rolling a mat and stepping around a mat).
3. Individual: This is given to only one child at a time (brushing teeth).



## *Practical Life Activities*



## *Practical Life Activities*



# Practical Life Activities



## Sensorial Activities

### **Why Sensorial Training is Important**

(North American Montessori Center – Sensorial Text (2009); P.8-9)

1. Sensorial training assists in the natural development of the child and gives her a sense of self-identity and security within the learning environment
2. It provides a basis for learning in an orderly manner, which supports psychological and neurological development
3. Although sensitive periods are transitory, the impressions that a child gathers are long-lasting. Sensibility acquired during a sensitive period is not lost even though that sensitive period has passed.
4. Repetition and frequency of activity develop the senses.
5. If a sense is isolated, it can become more refined
6. Sensorial material is based on a logical learning sequence, progressing from the concrete to the abstract
7. The materials provide indirect preparation for intellectual life. They refine the senses and develop cognitive skills such as thinking, judging, associating and comparing.
8. Children develop powers of observation such as attention and concentration
9. The materials promote “auto-education” or self-learning

### **Indirect Purpose:**

#### Mathematical Development

- Prepares mathematical mind
- Introduction to base ten
- Exposure to units of measurement
- Identifies mathematical relationships
- Attributes highlighted: size, weight, volume
- Observation skills development

#### Language and Writing Development

- Left to right eye movements encouraged
- Attention span increased and improved
- Fosters oral skill development
- Extends and sharpens vocabulary
- Improves hand/eye coordination
- Increases visual and auditory discrimination
- Develops three finger ‘pencil’ grip for writing

### **The Ten Senses**

Senses gather information from the environment and transmit it to the brain. There are ten fundamental senses known to experimental psychology:

1. **Visual Sense (Sight):** the organ for this sense is the eye. Within the eye are difference aspects of sight. Other organs are responsible for size, black and white, light intensity, movement and shape.

2. **Auditory Sense (Acoustic/hearing):** the organ responsible for this sense is the ear. The different auditory qualities we can experience are: pitch or tone (music), human voice, noise and the absence of noise (or silence).
3. **Olfactory Sense (smell):** the organ responsible for this sense is the nose. There are four qualities our olfactory sense can detect: fragrance, putrid, burned and spicy.
4. **Gustatory Sense (taste):** the organ responsible for taste is our tongue. We experience the taste of bitter at the back, sweet at the sides, sour at the tip and salty throughout the tongue. (soft-hard)
5. **Tactile Sense (touch):** touch is very important to the child because they depend on it, their lips and mouth are especially sensitive. The tactile sensation ranges from rough to smooth.
6. **Muscular Sense (kinesthetic):** this sense makes us aware of parts and movements that the body makes. It also forms the basis of our muscular memory.
7. **Stereo Gnostic Sense:** this sense is also known as the “blind’s man sense”. It allows tactile and muscular senses to be combined.
8. **Thermic Sense:** this sense registers temperature. The cells responsible are spread throughout the body. The range we experience is from hot to cold.
9. **Baric Sense:** the sensation of weight. The cells responsible are spread throughout the body. The range we experience is from light to heavy.
10. **Pain:** the organs responsible for this sensation are spread throughout the skin and also inside the body. The two types we experience are piercing and pressure.

### Effects of Sensorial Activities

- The sensorial materials are powerful tools that bring a child’s unconscious impressions into their conscious awareness. They allow the child to create a basis of order in their mind and allow intelligent exploration of the environment.
- The materials clarify the child’s vision and eventually lead to fundamental abstract thinking.
- The child’s motor coordination improves and as the senses become refined they can gather more reliable and accurate information.
- The refined senses create more awareness of beauty and enhance artistic creativity. The child is more articulate, more analytical and more prepared for intellectual activities.
- The Sensorial Activities assist in the early detection of disabilities or weaknesses in a child’s perception. The materials use all senses; it can allow a child who has difficulty in one area to still learn effectively by stimulating another area of sensitivity.

### Description:

Dr. Maria Montessori designed Sensorial materials to stimulate and refine the senses. Sensorial materials were previously intended to facilitate development for children with intellectual disabilities. Dr. Montessori took this successful approach and created materials for all children. She maintained that there were special times where children would best benefit from Sensorial materials, and she called these times “sensitive times.” During these times the child is most receptive to develop a particular area of



sensory growth. It's the teacher's role to provide meaningful and purposeful sensorial materials so to take full advantage of these sensitive periods.

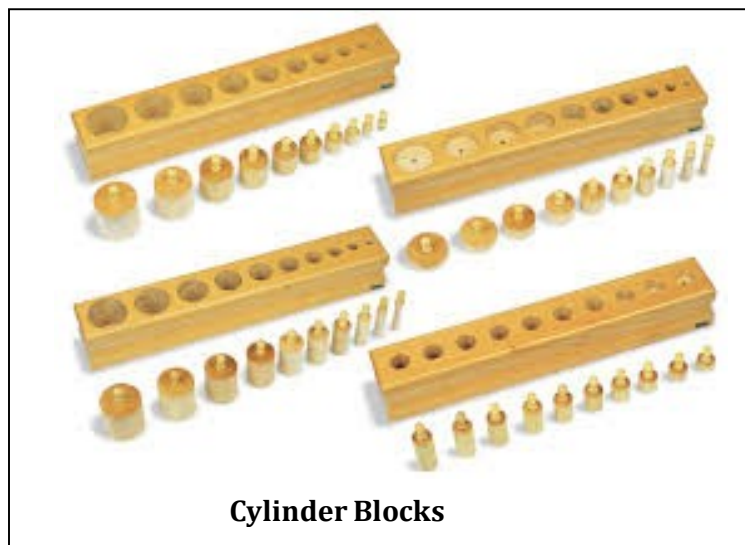
Sensorial materials facilitate the child in refining and verbally defining and describing differences in shape, size, color, texture, weight and smell. The child takes what they learn with the materials and is then able to apply it to the world around them. The Sensorial materials are designed to be unfamiliar to the child, so that they have a natural curiosity to learn and repetitively work with the activity. The goal is for the material to be interesting and visually appealing to encourage repetitive use.

Practical Life activities prepare children for Sensorial activities. In starting with Practical Life activities the child will establish a sense of how to focus on and complete a task – approaching work in an orderly fashion. Once they have acquired this understanding the child is prepared to benefit from the order and Control of Error that is built directly into the Sensorial materials.

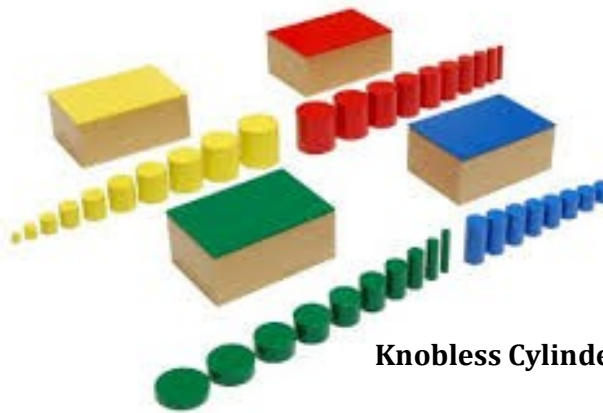
The Sensorial materials are created so that the errors are obvious; this is called the 'Control of Error'. This allows the child to work independently and adjust any miscalculation without needing any interruptions from the teacher to correct them. The teacher will observe and re-present the activity only after the child has completed the activity, if they notice mistakes. It is important that the teacher does not interrupt the child's work period. The 'Control of Error' fosters a sense of independence and inner-discipline for the child, which carries into all other facets of the child's life.

**Materials:**

Cylinder Blocks  
The Pink Tower  
The Broad/Brown Stair  
The Long Stair (Red Rods)  
Knobless Cylinders  
Sounds Cylinders  
Smelling Bottles  
Touch Boards & Tablets  
Bells  
Fabrics  
Baric Tablets  
Thermic Bottles  
Tasting Bottles  
The Color Tablets  
Binomial Cube  
Geometric Solids  
Geometry Cabinet  
Constructive Triangles  
Trinomial Cube



# *Sensorial Materials*



**Knobless Cylinders**



**Pink Tower**

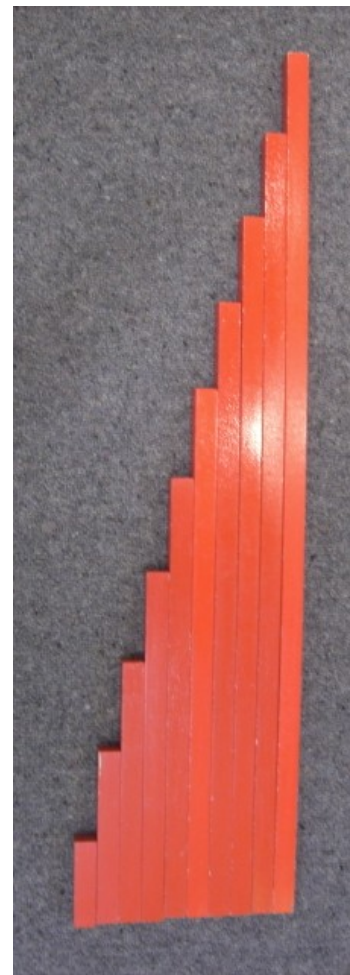


**Broad/Brown Stair**

**Sound  
Cylinders**



**Smelling  
Bottles**

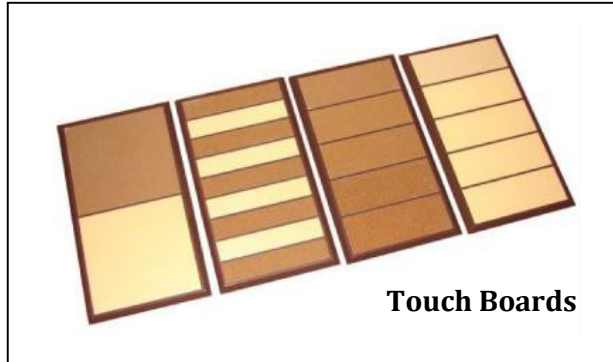


**Long Stair (Red Rods)**



**Touch Tablets**

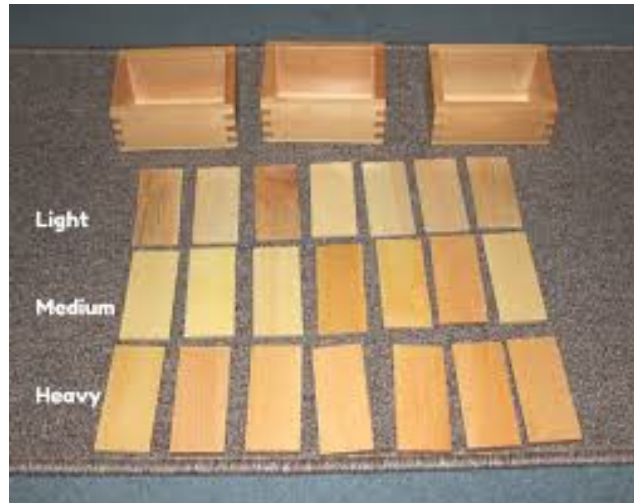
## *Sensorial Materials*



**Touch Boards**



**Thermic Bottles**



**Baric Tablets**



**Bells**

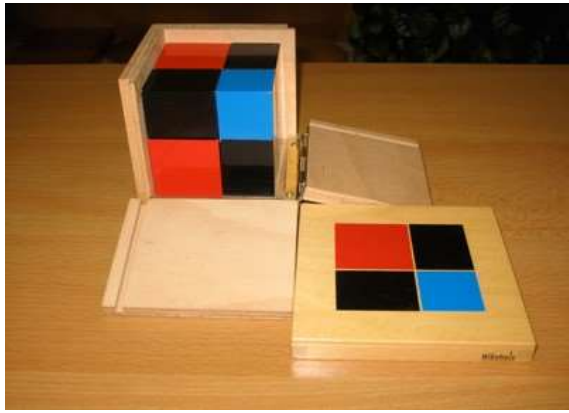


**Color Tablets**



**Fabrics**

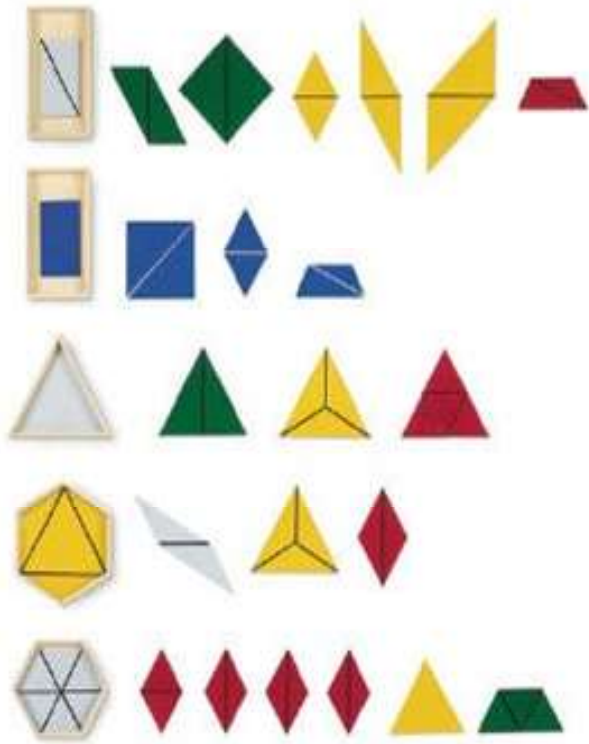




**Binomial Cube**



**Trinomial Cube**



**Constructive Triangles**



**Geometric Solids**



**Tasting Bottles**



**Geometry Cabinet**

*Sensorial  
Materials*



## Mathematics

### **Areas of Study:**

Arithmetic (i.e. addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) Algebra (ie. solving for variables)

Geometry (i.e. building, measuring, two/three dimensional shapes, movement on a grid)

Trigonometry (branch of geometry – i.e. relations between sides of right angle)

Calculus (computing changing qualities – i.e. engineering, physics)

Statistics (analyzing large bodies of numbers – i.e. trends, probability)

### **Description:**

The first mathematical problem children are faced with is understanding quantity. Children will develop intellectual maturity that cannot be taught, but that evolves over time, naturally.

Dr. Maria Montessori developed numerous mathematics activities to promote learning by using concrete materials that they can be touched and manipulated. In the Montessori learning environment, the children not only see the symbol representing numbers but can actually hold the corresponding quantities in their hands.

After decades of research, Dr. Montessori came to the conclusion that if children could count 1-9 they could just as easily count from 10-90. Through this discovery she developed the ten-bead bar and from that moment the activities grew exponentially.

### **Materials:**

Large Number Rods

Small Number Rods

Number Cards

Sandpaper Numbers

Cut-out Numerals with counters

Spindle Box

Bead Bars

Short Bead Stair

Long Bead Stair

Short Chains

Long Chains

Ten Boards

Multiplication Board

Division Board



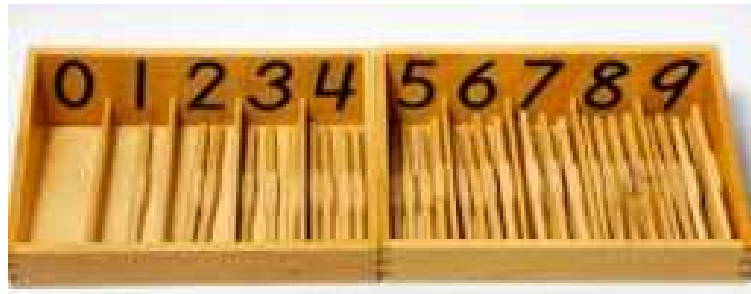
**Number Cards**



**Cut-out Numerals with counters**



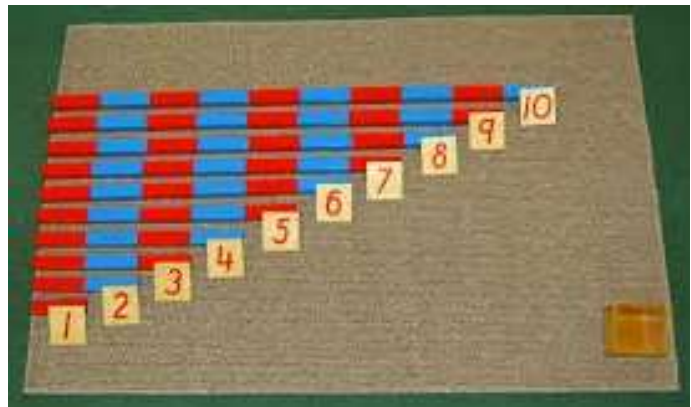
**Long Chain**



**Spindle Box**



**Ten Board**



**Large Number Rods**



**Short Chain**



**Bead Stair**



**Sandpaper Numbers**

## Language Arts

### **Areas of study:**

- Reading
  - Whole language
  - Phonics
- Writing
- Printing
- Cursive
- Oral Language

### **Description:**

Within the first month of life children are already building a foundation of oral language development that later lends to literacy skill development. Literacy development is fueled by interaction with parents, teachers, and peers. It is extremely important that the child be immersed with a variety of language development opportunities.

The Montessori environment is organized in a way to promote reading and writing simultaneously. When the child learns the phonetic sounds of the letters they also trace the formation of the letter using the sandpaper letters. This supports Dr. Montessori's belief that using many senses during the learning process would encourage a more meaningful learning experience. The tactile experience of tracing the letter while saying the sound creates and strengthens the same information with more than one pathway making it easier for children to retrieve the information again in the future.

The well-rounded Language Arts program includes a wide-range of activities, which include, reading, writing, active listening, public speaking, presentations, singing, reciting poetry, chanting, rhyming, large, small, and one-on-one learning opportunities,

The reading program is delivered using a progressive system, which consists of first the pink box, followed by the blue box, and finally the yellow box. The boxes contain objects or pictures, with a corresponding word to match. Also within the reading program are pink, blue, and yellow booklets and wordlists for the students to practice.

One very important life skill that is still an important part of the Montessori Language Arts program is cursive writing. Dr. Montessori believed it actually easier for children to learn the flowing formation of cursive writing and taught this form of writing prior to regular printing. The students use a variety of mediums to practice printing. Some examples are sandpaper letters, sandbox and paint brush, pencil and paper (worksheets),

Sandpaper Letters  
Reading Boxes (Pink, Blue, Yellow)  
Movable Alphabet  
Metal Insets  
Wooden Language Cards  
Sandbox  
Worksheets



## Language Arts Activities



## Geography

### **Description:**

Children are very curious about the world around them. Dr. Montessori took notice to the consistent interest the children had in working and learning about the globe. One significant way of motivating curiosity is through having numerous pictures throughout the classroom of different people, cultures, and places around the world. This helps the children formulate accurate ideas and visualize places outside of what they see on a regular basis.

The teacher will first introduce the children to land, water and air and later move to introducing the globe. In this sequence, the children will then be able to understand what the colors represent on the globe. Planet earth is introduced as a sphere but is then presented 2-dimensional as a map. In early years, the emphasis is placed on learning the continents and countries of the world; in later years, the children will focus on my details within the country, such as the capital cities of the countries.

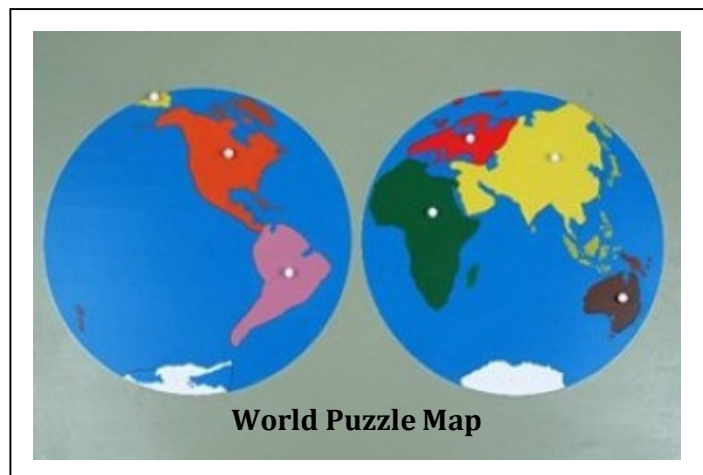
One important aspect that is invited into the children's study is to have children and their family share their different cultures, knowledge, and personal experience about their culture with the other children. The Summer Olympics event is a culminating activity that introduces the children to numerous cultures around the world and authentic dishes from those countries.

### **Materials:**

Globe  
World Puzzle Map  
Continent Puzzle Maps  
Land and Water Forms  
Flags of the World  
Geography Pictures



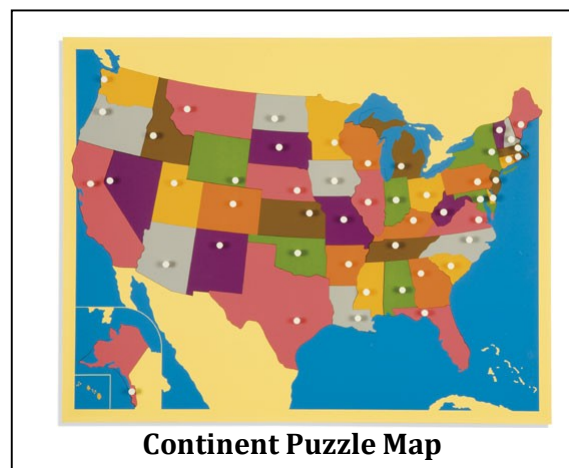
**Globe**



**World Puzzle Map**



**Flags of  
the World**



**Continent Puzzle Map**

## History

### **Description:**

Introducing history, which incorporates the solar system, the beginning life on earth and early man and civilization, the child can see clearly what humanity has done to this date to benefit our world and civilization now. The history strand can pull in lessons about animal life and Dinosaurs, prehistoric times, timeline of life, historical landforms, and culture.

History is a difficult concept to understand for children, who live in the moment. Children need to comprehend themselves and how they fit within the bounds of time. The lessons about history also include days of the week, months of the year and seasons; this helps children begin to understand the concept of time.

The Montessori program places great emphasis on important historical people -people who have made discoveries and inventions, artists, composers and of course Maria Montessori and other influential people of history. Children are fascinated and very interested in learning about people in history. The difficult part for them to grasp is the concept of time. Learning materials to learn the concept of time in history are timelines and visual aids, which can help children, understand the passing of time.

Another important concept when learning about history, are looking at the impacts of people and time on our present state. The children can begin to see how they can impact the future, emphasizing their responsibility to care for our planet for future generations. This can branch into a multitude of learning opportunities in social justice, global warming, and planet preservation.

## Science and Nature

*“When the child goes out, it is the world itself that offers itself to him. Let us take the child out to show him real things instead of making objects which represent ideas and closing them up in cupboards.”*

– Dr. Maria Montessori

Children are natural observers. They are fascinated by the phenomenon found in the natural world. They flourish and have a natural interest in exploring the world around them. The Montessori Method strongly values a variety of science and nature learning experiences. The children are the primary teachers through their natural inquiry and curiosity about what they experience with their senses.

### **Description**

Science and nature is all around us. Young children interact with the natural world everywhere they go. Using their senses, they investigate what the world around them feels like, tastes like, sounds like, and is like and how they can interact with it. Maria Montessori recognized the young child’s need to observe and absorb information about the world around them.

Encountering something new in nature sparks the child's curiosity and leads to a learning opportunity: "What is that? What is it called? How does it feel/smell/taste/sound?". In this sensitive period of sensorial development, children should be encouraged to explore their environment with their senses. Once their senses have been awakened, they can be shown more abstract concepts such as how to care for plants, how to feed and water the class pet, and the different shapes found in leaves, the parts of a turtle or butterfly. Dr. Montessori realized that children by absorbing everything in their surroundings, it was important for them to learn the proper names for things. She created the Montessori nomenclature materials (3-part cards, charts, and booklets along with their controls of error) to help children develop their vocabulary and increase their understanding of the world around them.

Incorporated to the program on a very regular basis is the solar system. Children will carry a planet earth and walk around a sun to represent how old they are when it is their birthday. Prior to walking around the sun, there is a brief discussion on orbits that travel around the sun, and what planets belong on each orbit, along with a brief description of the planets closest to the sun and why we cannot live there. This is a fantastic way for children to get a concrete understanding of a very abstract idea, which is exactly what Montessori attempts in her creation of the Montessori materials. The planet earth also splits apart so that the students can see the layers within the earth.

## **Botany**

### **Description**

Botany is part of the cosmic whole. It is our responsibility to help the child explore the biological aspects of their environment. We as teachers can best accomplish this by providing a space that the child can explore which serves as a microcosm for their environment- the world!

Our primary purpose when introducing botany to the child is to help them enrich, develop and understand the world in which they live. Our second purpose is to help children realize the significance of the delicate balance in nature. Plants are indispensable to all life on Earth for they are the only component on earth that can harness the energy of the sun to create food and fuel. Children can understand that we harvest plants for our own benefit and survival, but it is important that discretion be used when harvesting so nothing is wasted.

The study of Botany concentrates on learning the names of the different parts of plants. The teacher should always be sure to have some plants in the classroom for the children to water, clean and nurture. This provides the child with a understanding the importance of plants in the world.

## **Zoology**

### **Description**

Children are very interested in animals. They are fascinated by the fact that like themselves they possess life and character. The five groups are vertebrates that the children will study are amphibians, mammals, birds, fish and reptiles.

## **Areas of Study**

Children are introduced to a wide array of scientific principles:

### Zoology

- The difference between plants and animals.
- Identifying and classifying animals
- Classification of living and non living things, including Linnaean classification of plants and animals
- Identifying parts of insects, arachnids, crustaceans, mollusks, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals
- Basic needs of animals
- Animal homes
- Reproduction
- Lifecycles
- Food Chains
- Adaptation
- Hibernation
- Animal defense mechanisms
- Investigating how humans use animals
- Caring for captive animals
- Human organ systems

### Botany

- Basic needs of plants
- Parts of Herbaceous Plants
- Parts of Trees & Shrubs
- Identification of roots, stems, leaves, seeds, fruit
- Growing and caring for indoor and outdoor plants
- Investigating how people use plants



## *Science and Nature Materials*

Health Sciences

- Self esteem
- Systems of the human body
- Nutrition
- Physical Education
- Safe food handling
- Personal Hygiene

## Microscopic Organisms - Matter

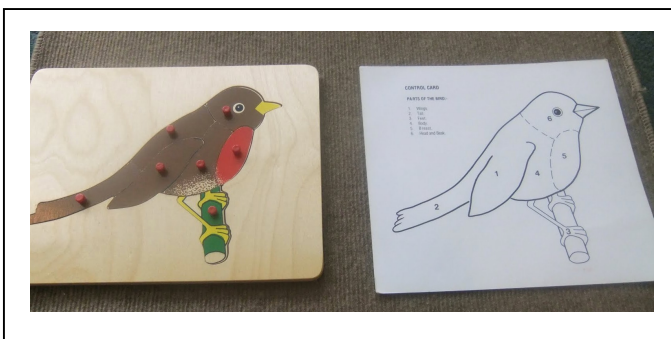
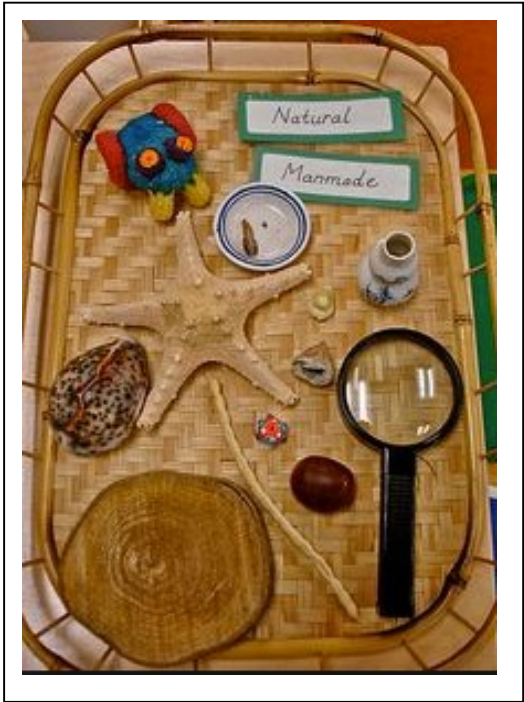
- Atoms & Molecules
- The Periodic Table of Elements
- States of Matter
- Elements, Compounds and Mixtures
- Water cycle

## Technology

- Roman arches
- Simple machines

## Solar System

- Model Planets
- Solar system mobile



## The Arts

The Arts is broken into the categories of music, dance, and visual arts. Music

### Music

The music program teaches the children about instruments, composers, and musicians. It provides the students with the opportunity to play instruments, sing, listen to music, and identify the different music notes.

### Dance

The dance program offers the students the opportunity to learn a variety of dance moves. The focus is on Zumba, hip-hop, and expressionist dancing. The children prepare dance performances for both the Christmas concert and Graduation.

### Visual Arts

The Montessori arts program emphasizes a strong sense of natural beauty. The students are trained in variety art forms and use a variety of art mediums. Over the years, when students have shown an extensive interest in visual arts, the students have prepared and compiled beautiful art pieces for an Art Show for families and the community. Learning about the culture and history of different art forms and artists have led to numerous art projects. Some important artists the children learn about and use as inspiration are Vincent Van Gogh, Leonardo Da Vinci, Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, and Wassily Kandinsky.

## French Language

French is introduced to the students on a verbal basis. Physical activities, stories, songs and games actively introduced in French. Children develop thru listening comprehension skills and an awareness of other languages. Students are exposed to a range of activities that help them develop confidence and competence in French.

The vocabularies practiced are numbers colours, the date, the weather and seasons. The children also participate in word recognition activities.