

# The Montessori Curriculum

## The 3 to 6 year old Preschool Class

Children in the primary program possess what Dr. Montessori called the absorbent mind, the ability to absorb all aspects of one's culture and environment without effort or fatigue. As an aid to this period of the child's self-construction it is common for children to choose materials that are designed to be used by one student at a time. That said, there are also materials that are designed to be explored by 2 and 3 children at a time. The following areas of activity cultivate the children's adaptation and ability to express and think with clarity:

### Practical Life

Practical life exercises instill care for self, for others, and for the environment. Activities include many of the tasks children see as part of the daily routine in their home, such as preparing food and washing dishes, along with exercises of grace and courtesy. Through these tasks, children develop muscular coordination, enabling movement and the exploration of their surroundings. They learn to work at a task from beginning to end, and develop their powers of control and concentration.

### Sensorial

Sensorial materials serve as tools for development. Children build cognitive skills and learn to order and classify impressions by touching, seeing, smelling, tasting, listening, and exploring the physical properties of their environment.

### Language Arts

Language arts development is vital to human development. The Montessori environment is rich in oral language opportunities, allowing the child to experience conversations, stories, and poetry. The sandpaper letters help children link sound and symbol effortlessly, encouraging the development of written expression and reading skills. To further reading development, children are exposed to the study of grammar.

### Cultural

Cultural activities include an exploration of Geography, Continents, History, Life Sciences, Art, and Music. These topic areas are presented as extensions of the sensorial and language activities. Children learn about people and cultures in other countries with an attitude of respect and admiration. Through familiarity, exploration,

and discussion, children develop a reverence for all life. The comprehensive art and music programs give children every opportunity to enjoy a variety of creative activities, as well as gain knowledge of the great masters. Instruction in a foreign language, such as Spanish, may be incorporated within the classroom materials. With the aid of a bilingual teacher, instruction in a foreign language may be accomplished daily.

### Mathematics

Mathematics is foundational in a Montessori primary classroom and activities in this area help children learn and understand the concepts of math concretely through the use of manipulatives. This work helps children internalize mathematical concepts, prepares them for later abstract reasoning, and helps to develop problem-solving capabilities.

### Peace Education

Peace Education is presented to children across all levels in a Montessori school, and will be described briefly here. Typically peace education is presented as including a) inner peace, b) peace in community (the classroom), c) global peace, and d) peace for the natural world. Conflict resolution skills, listening, communication, respect, and inclusion are modeled extensively for children in all classrooms, regardless of level.