



“Children must grow not only in the body but in the spirit, and the mother longs to follow the mysterious spiritual journey of the beloved one who to-morrow will be the intelligent, divine creation, man.”

“The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn.”

Maria Montessori

What is a Montessori Education?

The Montessori Method is a child-focused approach that Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician, developed for educating children over a century ago and has been proven to foster rigorous, self-motivated growth for children in all areas of their development—cognitive, emotional, social, and physical.

Montessori education is student-led and self-paced but guided, assessed, and enriched by knowledgeable and caring teachers, the leadership of their peers, and a nurturing environment. There are usually 5 core components to implementing the Montessori Method:

1. **Using Montessori Materials:** A hallmark of Montessori education is the hands-on approach to learning and the use of specially designed learning materials. Beautifully and precisely crafted, Montessori's distinctive learning materials each teach a single skill or concept. The materials follow a logical, developmentally appropriate progression that allows the child to develop an abstract understanding of a concept. Each material teaches a single skill or concept at a time—for example, the various “dressing frames” help toddlers learn to button, zip, and tie; 3-dimensional grammar symbols help elementary students analyze sentence structure and style. And, built into many of the materials is a mechanism (“control of error”) for providing the student with some way of assessing her progress and correcting her mistakes, independent of the teacher. The concrete materials provide passages to abstraction and introduce concepts that become increasingly complex. As students



progress, the teacher replaces some materials with others, ensuring that the level of challenge continues to meet their needs.

2. **The Multi-Age Classroom:** In Montessori schools, multi-age groupings enable younger children to learn from older children and experience new challenges through observation. Older children reinforce their own learning by teaching concepts they have already mastered, while developing leadership skills and serving as role models. Because each student's work is individual, children progress at their own pace; there is cooperation rather than competition between the ages. This arrangement mirrors the real world, in which individuals work and socialize with people of all ages and dispositions.
3. **Child-Directed Work:** Montessori education supports children in choosing meaningful and challenging work that captures their interest, leading to engagement, intrinsic motivation, sustained attention, and a sense of responsibility to oneself and others. This child-directed work is supported by the design and flow of the Montessori classroom, which is created to ignite each child's curiosity and to provide the opportunity to work in calm, uncluttered spaces either individually or with peers.
4. **Uninterrupted Work Periods:** In Montessori classrooms, an extended period of "free choice" time called the "uninterrupted work period" recognizes and respects individual variations in the learning process. During the work period, students have time to select and work through various tasks and responsibilities at their own pace, without interruption.
5. **Trained Montessori Teachers:** A properly credentialed Montessori teacher understands the importance of enabling children to develop naturally. The teacher observes children within a specific age range and introduces them to challenging and developmentally appropriate lessons and materials based on observations of each child's unique interests, abilities, and social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

What Are the Benefits of a Montessori Education?

Montessori education offers our children opportunities to develop their potential as they step out into the world as engaged, competent, responsible, and respectful citizens with an understanding and appreciation that learning is for life.

- **Each child is valued as a unique individual:** Montessori education recognizes that children learn in different ways and accommodates all learning styles. Students are free to learn at their own pace, each advancing as he is ready, guided by the teacher and an individualized learning plan.
- **Beginning at an early age, Montessori nurtures order, concentration, and independence:** Intentional classroom design, materials, and daily routines support the student's emerging "self-regulation" (the ability to educate one's self, and to think about what one is learning), in toddlers through adolescents.
- **Students are part of a close, caring community:** The multi-age classroom—typically spanning 3 years—recreates a family structure. Older students enjoy stature as mentors and role models; younger children feel supported and gain confidence about the challenges ahead. Teachers model respect, loving kindness, and peaceful conflict resolution.
- **Montessori students enjoy freedom within limits:** Working within parameters set by their teachers and the classroom community, students are active participants in deciding what their focus of learning will be.
- **Students are supported in becoming active seekers of knowledge:** Teachers provide environments where students have the freedom and the tools to pursue answers to their



own questions. Internal satisfaction drives the child's curiosity and interest and results in joyous learning that is sustainable over a lifetime.

- **Self-correction and self-assessment are an integral part of the Montessori classroom approach:** As they mature, students learn to look critically at their work, and become adept at recognizing, correcting, and learning from their errors.
- **Montessori supports social-emotional skills:** Contemporary research supports the 100-year-old Montessori Method's effectiveness, indicating that children who learn in Montessori classrooms demonstrate stronger socioemotional skills in many areas than children in more traditional environments.

Given the freedom and support to question, to probe deeply, and to make connections, Montessori students become confident, enthusiastic, self-directed learners who are able to think critically and work collaboratively.

Sources:

<https://amshq.org/About-Montessori/What-Is-Montessori/Core-Components-of-Montessori>

<https://amshq.org/Families/Why-Choose-Montessori/Benefits-of-Montessori>