

The Philosophy of Montessori

Supporting Montessori at Home

"Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future."

-Maria Montessori

The Montessori Philosophy

- Your child has a strong sense of personal dignity. This must be respected by the adults your child emulates and imitates.
- Listen to your child when he wants to tell you something. Bend or sit so that you are on his level & you have eye contact.

The Montessori Philosophy

- Try to understand your child's ideas and feelings and consider them in your family life. Things which seem trivial to you can be very important to your child.
- Include your child in family plans and decisions whenever possible. Help her feel that she is an important member of her family.

The Montessori Philosophy

- No human being is educated by another person. He must do it himself or it will never be done.
- The entire method is based on Montessori's observations and understanding of the child AS HE IS, not as adults imagine he might or should be.
- Goal of early childhood education is to cultivate the child's own natural desire to learn.

The Absorbent Mind

- From conception to age 4, the individual develops 50% of his mature intelligence, from ages 4 - 8 he develops another 30%...(Bloom)
- Children absorb information from the environment.

Sensitive Periods

- The young child has certain sensitive periods when it is easiest for her to learn some particular things.
- Oral Language Development
- Muscular coordination
- Concern for Order in environment
- Refinement of senses
- Writing
- Reading

Goals of the Montessori Classroom

- Order
- Concentration
- Coordination
- Independence

Order

- The classroom environment provides the sense of order critical for young children.
- The responsibility for getting & returning work from the shelves reinforces this sense of order.
- The works themselves provide order in learning concrete concepts.

Order at Home

- Provide low shelves for toys and games instead of a box or basket so child can see available choices.
- Limit the number of things on the shelves & trade them out as child loses interest in some. Keep the extras in that old toy box.

Concentration

- Working individually at tasks that interest her, the child is allowed to develop concentration and work habits necessary for later learning.

Concentration at Home

- Television & computer games do not encourage concentration - there is too much going on visually for the brain to truly concentrate.
- Free play, outside or inside, alone or with others, allows a child to become absorbed in their own thoughts & increases concentration.

Coordination

- Materials used in the classroom develop the muscle coordination needed for later learning.

Coordination at Home

- Outside play at parks and playgrounds improves coordination of large muscles.
- Playing in a sandbox with tools like scoops, spoons, & funnels improves small muscles coordination.
- Encourage your child to use scissors, markers, pencils, crayons, etc.. to make art.

Independence

- "I can do it myself!"
- Activities and expectations in the classroom environment foster independence.

Independence at Home

- Arrange the home environment to allow your child to function independently as much as possible. Bowls, plates, cups at his level. Healthy snacks that he can get for himself.
- Don't do anything for your child that he is capable of doing himself. Clothes, shoes, etc..

The Work of the Developing Child

- Children enjoy the process of doing, not necessarily the end-product.
- Contributing to her own well-being and that of society builds a child's skills and sense of confidence and esteem.
- Children prefer meaningful, purposeful activity over play. Let them help set the table, fix dinner, vacuum, etc.. WITH YOU.

The Work of the Developing Child

- Children learn through their senses - the hand is the chief teacher of the child.
- Children learn from watching and imitating.
- Children learn through repetition.

“They (children) are not understood because adults judge them according to their own standards.

They believe that a child is concerned with external ends, and they lovingly assist him to attain them. Instead, a child is dominated by an unconscious need to develop himself. He consequently condemns anything that has been attained and longs for that which is still to be achieved. For example, he would rather dress himself than be dressed, even magnificently. He prefers washing himself to the pleasant feeling of being clean. He would rather build a house than own one. And he is thus disposed because he must first form his own life before he can enjoy it. In this self-formation is his true and almost sole delight.”

Maria Montessori, *Discovery of the Child*