Welcome to the Aspen Class!
Back-to-School Night Information

Mrs. Fagan

Hi everyone! I’m Mrs. Fagan. This will be my thirteenth year teaching at CMPSS. I love Montessori because it individually meets the children where they are at academically, and addresses the child as a whole (physically, socially, etc...). I have been married to my husband Larry for 38 years and we were blessed with two daughters, two sons-in-law, and two grandchildren. I look forward to working with your family this year!

Miss Jeni

Hi everyone! I’m Jeni Engelhardt. This is my third year working in the Aspen Class at our beautiful Shingle Springs campus. I have been married to my husband, Jared, for 14 years and we have two amazing children named Aiden (11) and Maddie (8). I am so excited to work with your family this year!

Open Communication is Our Priority:

- **Contact:** We value and appreciate open communication with our parents. To ensure you receive our full and undivided attention, we encourage you to make an appointment during office hours. During class time your call will be answered by the front office staff and messages will be given to us as not to disrupt class time. We will return your call at the end of the school day. The best way to communicate is to call before or after school or write a note on the planner. E-mails and ParentSquare messages are for quick basic information exchange, not for longer discussions. Email the teacher jfagan@cacmp.org or TA jengelhardt@cacmp.org or even better, email both of us.

- **Folders:** We use a FORK (Fully Organized and Responsible Kid) Binder. We need your help to keep the school communication folder and the homework folders in the FORK binder. Communication folders (red) have new information sent home each Monday and homework folders (blue) have new assignments on Friday.

- **Newsletters:** Our grade-level newsletters and announcements are on the http://www.ss.cacmp.org/ web page and ParentSquare.

- **Planners:** This is a great way to keep communicating with your child and teachers as to your student’s progress and can alert us to any confusion or concerns you might have. Planners go home Monday through Friday and should be initialed by a parent each day.

Sign-off Legend:

- **Initialed:** Job is 100% complete and accurate. Yay!
- **Line through a job:** Excused. Student worked hard today and other jobs took longer than usual. No worries.
- **Circled:** Not attempted. Student had time to complete this job, but made choices other than working.
- **Dot on Line:** Corrections or work is incomplete. Card number will be written so the students can complete this job first tomorrow.
How We Set Our Students Up For Success

The Aspen classroom is a safe spot for ALL children, NO, MATTER WHAT. That is our “soapbox.” It has been scientifically proven that people will only be ready to learn if they possess the feeling that they are safe, loved, and nurtured (Google: Maslow’s Theory of Development).

We promote kindness, empathy, grace and courtesy, and respect. Students walk away with a sense of unconditional love from their teachers and responsibility for the care of others.

The above being said, we take a proactive approach to discipline by teaching good communication skills, self-advocacy skills, and appropriate problem-solving skills through teacher modeling, character education curriculum, daily community meetings, and role-play. Our hope is to educate our students to know the steps for solving small issues before those issues erupt into big problems. When big problems arise, we intervene as guides and mentors, and sometimes become the choice-makers, for larger issues.

Some of the resources and strategies that we use to build and foster strong problem-solving skills:

- Research-based character education vocabulary and lessons frequently presented in our classroom (PBIS, Choices, Positive Discipline, Growth Mindset, and Love and Logic)
- Direct teaching and role-play of classroom procedures, using grace and courtesy
- Our class agenda book, where students can write down concerns so that our classroom family can discuss and process the issue as a team
- Further development of the Peace Talk strategy, learned in K/1
- Community Meeting time that includes team-building and discussions
- We always like to catch students doing the right thing and we let them know
- Recovery Card: This is a self-monitoring approach. Taken at times they choose or given when a student’s behavior is making it difficult for others to learn or teachers to teach. They will go to a neighboring classroom until they feel ready to return and have their best minutes with us.
- Teachers who participate in frequent professional development and research up-to-date methods of supporting all learning styles

When Do We Communicate With You About Issues That Arise?

We communicate with our families FREQUENTLY. Notes in the planner or Parent Square messages with positive observations and precious photos will come to you, as well as when we have concerns and need for family follow-up. As parents ourselves, we want to hear the good news and positive progress stories about our own children. We don’t want to hear from our children’s teachers only for negative reasons. That is not a way to build a strong, lasting connection between your family and our classroom family.

What Are the Fun Ways Our Students Get to Share in Our Classroom?

Class Manager: Class Manager is a special job that our students get to have, a few times per year. The Class Manager position lasts for one week at a time and allows each student to learn and practice: good leadership skills, presentation skills, and grace and courtesy skills.

The Agenda Book and Class Meetings: The Agenda Book is where a student can anonymously write about an issue that is affecting them or the whole class. We use this tool to empower students to communicate and resolve their issues. When an issue arises involving the classroom community and you hear about it, ask your child first “how they have tried to solve it?” and then ask if they have written it in the “Agenda Book” so the class is able to help solve the issue or problem. When issues involve one or a few other students, please encourage your child to utilize the Wheel of Choice, Peace Rose, and/or “Talk it Out” cards,
• **Class Manager Sharing**: One day (other than Friday) that week, your child is invited to share 3 ITEMS (please limit their sharing to three items!) of his/her choice from home. Your child will be asked to tell the class the significance of the chosen 3 items. Please — NO TOYS — however, great ideas include a photograph, artwork, souvenir, artifacts, items from nature, something homemade or anything related to our units of study. Please practice with your child how to discuss the sharing items, as this is an opportunity to improve public speaking skills. Live sharing (dogs, cats, etc.) needs to be approved by a teacher the day before.

• **Timeline of Life**: Each Class Manager should bring in their *Timeline of Life* to share on the first day, the first time they are Class Manager. Timelines include one picture of each year and a brief description. An example was shown at Back-to-School Night.

• **Flowers**: In addition, the Class Manager may bring in ONE bunch of flowers which will be put in vases and beautify the environment. Parents, consider coming in early (8:15 is perfect) on the Monday they are class managers, to assist them with flower arranging.

**Birthdays:**

*Birthdays...* Birthdays are awesome and exciting! It is also difficult to bring focus back after a big celebration. **Feelings at this age can be crushed very easily.** Please remember, invitations are **not** allowed at school unless you are planning on inviting the entire class to the party. In Aspen, we make birthdays extra-special by:

- Having a traditional Birthday Walk
- Children love to share a simple healthy homemade snack with their class. You may send the snack with your child the morning of their birthday walk.

**How do Personal Snacks and Lunches work in Aspen?**

Your child is at that awesome age where **they are able to learn how to pack a healthy snack and lunch for themselves** each day, with your guidance and approval.

*BrainFood*

Did you know that your organs, tissues, muscles and hormones are all made from proteins? The protein found in foods is used by every part of the body to develop, grow and function properly. It can be argued that nothing is more important than consuming protein foods, and because proteins are involved in just about every body function, it's important that you consume foods high in protein every day. [https://draxe.com/protein-foods/](https://draxe.com/protein-foods/)

For major brain power and good gut health, proteins like chicken or fish, fresh salads with ingredients like broccoli, kale, pasta, and vinaigrette, probiotic infused yogurt, and small helpings of fruit with a cold water bottle make a winning combination, according to Harvard Medical School, and Rachael Ray.com! Make sure your child includes an ice-pack or uses a thermos-style container because **we do not do warm-ups anymore!**

**Snacks**: Students place a snack on the snack tray in the morning if they want to have a snack during the morning work time. Snacks are an opportunity to refuel our brains and bodies with good nutrition. Students monitor their own bodies and refuel when the need arises. **We suggest a protein and a fruit or vegetable.**

**School Lunches**: Order forms go out monthly and must be returned TO THE OFFICE by the due date with a separate check, but you may write one check for all siblings. The price is $5.00 per meal and is used primarily by the middle school as a fund-raising. Please keep a record of the days you have ordered food, so there is not a hungry student at lunchtime.
2/3 Homework Folder:

Homework assignments have been carefully crafted and chosen to:

- Build a foundation of responsible work ethics that will carry on through Upper Elementary, High School, College, and the Work Force
- Practice skills recently learned in the classroom
- Allow students to build confidence with presentation and public speaking skills

The Circle of Life Homework:

Blue Plastic homework Folder Goes Home Each Friday Afternoon /Work at home/Return Homework in Folder Next Friday Morning

1. **Book Reports/Projects:** Introduce students to different reading genres and writing styles
2. **Weekly Spelling Practice:** (The weekly sort reinforces the concept being taught and is the first step each week for homework; then your child chooses 3 activities to facilitate mastery of spelling)
3. **Math:** At the second and third grade level, automaticity of math facts is a fundamental skill. Our expectation is mastery of addition and subtraction for seconds and multiplication and division for thirds. There will be information coming home in September about this in the homework folder.
4. **Reading:** We recommend reading with your child for at least 20 minutes a night.
   - Reading to your child is invaluable for them to hear what good reading sounds like and you can encourage their comprehension by asking questions along the way.
   - Listening to your child read to you at their reading level (not necessarily their grade level is key).
   - Sight Words Lists continue weekly for those who have yet to reach mastery. There are 40 lists which are started in our K/1 program.

### WHY READ 20 MINUTES AT HOME?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student A Reads</th>
<th>Student B Reads</th>
<th>Student C Reads</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes per day</td>
<td>3 minutes per day</td>
<td>1 minute per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,600 minutes per school year</td>
<td>900 minutes per school year</td>
<td>180 minutes per school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,800,000 words per year</td>
<td>352,000 words per year</td>
<td>6,000 words per year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Images showing reading progress and scores]

If they start reading for 20 minutes per night in Kindergarten, by the end of 6th grade, Student A will have read for the equivalent of 60 school days, Student B will have read for 12 school days, and Student C will have read for 3.

Want to be a better reader? Simply read.
CMP Encouragement and Education for Your Families and Policies You’ll Want to Know

- Parent Education
  - Parent Training:
    - 7 Habits of Highly Effective Volunteers
    - Love and Logic
    - Principal’s Cafe
    - Watch-Me-Work Night, more to come...
  - Video Link: please watch these at home:
    - https://www.youcubed.org/resources/four-boosting-messages-to-students/
    - https://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_persistence

- Parent Participation:
  - Please log your Parent Participation hours! Hours will be logged using ParentSquare. More information on how to do this will be coming soon!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements to volunteer on campus:</th>
<th>Requirements to volunteer and drive on field trips:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Cleared Live Scan fingerprinting (only needed once)</td>
<td>- Cleared Live Scan fingerprinting (only needed once)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Clear TB Test (valid for 4 years)</td>
<td>- Clear TB Test (valid for 4 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Attendance at the CMP &quot;Seven Habits of Highly Effective Volunteers&quot; training (only needed once)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Copy of the K4 Driving Record from DMV (updated every year)</td>
<td>- Copy of the K4 Driving Record from DMV (updated every year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Copy of current automotive insurance showing minimum coverage value of 100,000/300,000 (updated every year)</td>
<td>- Copy of valid Driver’s License</td>
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- Absences and Tardies: Please call the office if your child is sick and going to be absent. When arriving late, students must receive a tardy slip from the office before joining the 2/3 community in the classroom. Remember our school’s budget is largely determined by daily attendance, so do your part by scheduling vacations during the summer, and during the breaks we have throughout the school year. Further, your student may miss out on valuable lessons when they leave before dismissal, please schedule your child’s appointments during early release afternoons or school breaks.

- Dress Code and "Logo Friday": Thank you, in advance, for continuing to have your child dress them self in dress code appropriate clothing! Please refer to your CMP handbook for a complete list of board-approved clothing. If you ever want to know about great places to find non-logo clothing, please ask us! In addition, trust us when we tell you that there is a clear and distinct POSITIVE difference in the social atmosphere of a school that is free of logos! That being said, the last Friday of each month is FREE LOGO DAY!!! All school-appropriate logos can be worn on this special CMP day!

- Drop off and pick up: Our class begins at 8:30. Students may arrive at 8:20. Students arriving before 8:20 are directed to Club M for supervision. School ends at 3:00. It takes a lot of energy to get all our 2nd and 3rd grade students ready for pick up. Last year we began using colored name cards for your cars. Green pick-up is 3:05-3:10, Red is 3:10-3:20, and Yellow is 3:20-3:30. Thanks for your patience in this department!

Lastly and most importantly, we are honored and delighted to partner with you in your child’s Montessori education.
Volunteering in the Aspen Classroom?

Thank you. Your time here is appreciated and valued. Here are some general reminders for volunteers:

1. All volunteers must be cleared by the office to work in the classroom.
2. Volunteers must sign-in at the office and wear a volunteer badge while on campus.
3. Your presence allows the teachers more time to work individually with the students. Please honor this by discussing personal questions during teacher's office hours.
4. CMP honors the confidentiality of each and every student on campus. As outlined in CMP's Family Handbook, "Parents shall not talk about any student to another student, parent or other third party" (p. 25).

If you dropped by and are looking for something to do, please review the following list for suggestions of how you can help today:

**Student Help:**
- Read with students (SRA, sight words, To-With-By Books)
- Check jobs before students record their work (e.g., Tower, Language, Geometry)
- Provide encouragement by sitting next to a student working on a job
- Assist students clean their cubbies

**Classroom Help:**
- File Math, Language, Geometry, and SRA cards
- Straighten library (books are shelved by reading level)
- General dusting (e.g., windowsills, shelves, etc.)

We understand that your time is valuable and we thank you for your commitment to our school and your child's classroom.

*Mrs. Fagan and Miss Jeni*
What is a Volunteer?

Volunteer - a person who voluntarily offers himself or herself for a service or undertaking.

Definition - Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, the environment or individuals outside one's immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

Principles of Volunteering:
- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer.
- Volunteer work is unpaid.
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice.
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community.
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs.
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not-for-profit sector only.
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work.
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers.
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others.
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality.

In addition to being a part of parent hours, volunteering in the 2/3 environment is critical to the success of our program.

We have many options for volunteers, with commitments ranging from minimal to extensive.

- In class jobs include reading with students, checking in homework, administering spelling quizzes, folder preparation, special projects, talent sharing, and small group student work.
- At school jobs include classroom gardens, filing, dusting, laminating, and library.
- Special event jobs include driving on field trips, pancake breakfasts, school fundraisers, World Fair, 100th day, Science Expo, Field Day, Kid's Night Out, Bike Rodeo, and playground events.
- Take home jobs include sharpening pencils, laminating, crafting or sewing, washing towels and rugs, materials repair, project preparation, and miscellaneous donations.

Each class has resources for Volunteers when they arrive: Volunteer binder or poster, posted list of tasks, "help" clip board, etc.

We understand that your time is valuable and we thank you for your commitment to our school and classroom.

Mrs. Fagan and Miss Jeni
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<td>8:30-8:45</td>
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Aspen 2019-2020 Daily Schedule
How to Help your Child Succeed in Montessori Math in the Classroom and at Home
by Ally Webb
edited by 2/3 Team at the Shingle Springs Campus

There is truly nothing out there that we have come across so far in our years as teachers that teaches math concepts in such a wide variety of visual and tactile ways and thus can speak to such a wide range of learning styles as Montessori math materials. The following pages will briefly outline some of the concepts taught by the materials that CMP students will utilize most frequently in their Montessori Math, Albanesi Math and other classroom math exercises. Our hope is that by demonstrating how some of these concepts are played out, we will be able to help you not only support your child and the other learners when you volunteer in his or her classroom, but generalize some of these concepts with materials you have around the house, so that you can practice math skills with your child in a Montessori-like format when you don’t have the benefit of having classroom materials nearby.

Here are some of the most commonly-appearing materials that the children will be using in the classroom:

The Golden Beads

The golden beads illustrate the base ten system of numbers (a ten equals ten ones, or “units,” a hundred equals ten tens, etc.) in a very clear visual way. The child can see that ten hundred squares, when stacked on top of one another, literally look exactly like a thousand cube. Therefore, when performing “regrouping” steps in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division operations (otherwise known as “exchanging” or “borrowing”), he or she has a concrete understanding of why it’s acceptable to borrow one number from the thousands column, for example, and add ten more to the hundreds column before subtracting. On an even more basic level, though, the child is getting the concrete concept of what 764 looks like, and why it’s seven hundred sixty four rather than seventy-six four or seven sixty-four.

How to duplicate the golden beads at home: Make “golden beans” at home by using one bean for each “unit” (one), a popsicle stick with ten dots drawn on it for each ten, a paper square with ten rows of ten dots on it for each hundred (or glue ten popsicle sticks together, with ten dots on each stick), and a paper cube with ten rows of ten dots on each side with each thousand. Practice making equal exchanges with your child (e.g., “You want to trade me three units for one ten? Is that fair?”).
The Wooden Numeral Cards

The wooden numeral cards help the child move from the concrete *three thousand cubes, two hundred squares, one ten bar, eight unit beads* to the abstract 3,218 or three thousands, two hundreds, one ten, and eight units. The use of color is prevalent throughout Montessori math materials as a subconscious strategy for helping children memorize place value. The left brain sees 3,218, while the right brain sees green, red, blue, green. By integrating left- and right-brained approaches, we are not only creating balance and helping children use their whole brains to memorize place value, we are finding a way to access right-brained learners who typically struggle with the predominantly left-brained field of mathematics.

**Using color for place value at home:** If your child struggles with seeing 764 as *seventy-six four* rather than *seven hundred sixty-four*, try replicating the color scheme we use at school when you practice math at home. Trace over thousands and units with green, hundreds with red, and tens with blue. You can even cut out strips of paper and replicate all the color-coded numbers from 1-1000 as pictured above, and have your child practice covering up the two zeros on 700 with the 60, and covering the one zero in 60 with the number 4.

The Stamp Game

The stamp game works exactly like the golden beads, but is slightly more abstract (a ten is represented by a blue 10 stamp, rather than ten units, etc.). The children “build” the numbers with the stamps, and can then add, subtract, borrow, regroup them, etc. The problem represented with the stamps above would be $3,231 + 1,323$. 
The Bead Frame

The bead frame works similarly to the stamp game, in that the child can “build” numbers by sliding the appropriate number of units, tens, hundreds, and thousands over to the right. As with the golden beads and the stamp game, numbers can then be added, subtracted, and multiplied, by sliding over more beads and borrowing/exchanging as necessary. One of the major concepts that this material reinforces is the importance of starting math operations in the units column (note that the unit beads are at the top). If a child is always trying to add, subtract, or multiply numbers in the thousand columns first, the bead frame might be a good material for her to work with for a while.

The Colored Bead Bars

The colored bead bars provide a fantastic approach to memorizing things like quantity, proportion, greater than/less than, multiplication facts, and squaring numbers. While the left brain sees $2 + 4 = 6$, the right brain sees green bar + yellow bar = purple bar. While the left brain is memorizing $3 \times 7 = 21$, the right brain is seeing that $3 \times 7$ means I take 7 of these pink bars out of the box, or that I take 3 of the white bars out. Subconsciously, the children are also learning that $3 \times 7$ takes up the same amount of area as $7 \times 3$, thus reinforcing geometry concepts like area and equivalency. They can see how five, five bars make up a perfect blue square, and thus understand concretely what a concept like five squared really means. The child is not just memorizing $3 \times 7 = 21$ or $5 \times 5 = 25$; she concretely knows it to be true.

Duplicating the colored bead bar concept at home: Use markers to make dots of different colors on popsicle sticks. You may want to cut the popsicle sticks down to size. Make several of each number so that the child can practice his multiplication tables. Give him as much time as he needs to count every single dot at first if need be. The memorization will come naturally in time.
The Plastic Fraction Insets

The plastic fraction insets help children visually understand concepts like equivalency, reducing fractions, adding and subtracting fractions, etc. They can put two halves, three thirds, four fourths, etc. together and see that they make a whole. They can lay six eighths out on top of three fourths and see that they are equivalent. They can add 2/8 to 4/8 by piecing them together, and then reduce them. The plastic fraction insets take all the frustration out of fractions, and make them accessible in a visual and hands-on way.

Practicing fractions at home: Make fractions fun by cutting up food like pizza, apples, etc. Reinforce concepts like the statement that fractions are equal parts of a whole by showing how you cut an apple into equal pieces. You can even go one step further and show how one number can be a fraction of another number (for example, 4 is one third of 12) by dividing M&Ms or peanuts or pieces of popcorn into little cups or bowls. Regardless of what household tools you use, it is essential that you help your child understand fractions in a concrete way before he will be able to grasp them abstractly. When he moves on to multiplying and dividing fractions, adding fractions of different denominators, etc., he will be able to do these things more quickly and confidently because he has the foundational knowledge base he needs to tackle these more advanced operations without insecurity.

One Last Note

We hope that this packet has been informative for you. At the very least, what we hope you will take out of it is that Montessori stresses the importance of working with all mathematical functions, whether they be addition and subtraction, manipulating fractions, telling time, working with money, etc., in a concrete way before ever moving on to abstraction. One of the key Maria Montessori quotes we live by is, “Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed.” As difficult and counterintuitive as it may seem, try to refrain from intervening when you see the child struggling and/or making mistakes. Learning from her mistakes will help her not only sharpen her math skills, but is in fact a crucial coping skill that it is essential for her to master. Montessori materials will help the child learn to self-correct, and more often than not, if we stand back and give the child the opportunity to make discoveries about where he/she went wrong and how to fix it, we will be giving that child a gift that will last a lifetime.
I dreamed I stood in a studio
and watched two sculptors there.
The clay they used was a young child’s mind
and they fashioned it with care.

One was a teacher,
the tools she used were books and music and art;
One was a parent with a guiding hand
and a gentle loving heart.

And when at last their work was done.
They were proud of what they had wrought,
For the things they had worked into the child
could never be sold or bought.

Day after day, the teacher toiled with touch
that was careful, deft, and sure.
While the parent labored by her side
and polished and smoothed it over.

And each agreed they would have failed
if each had worked alone,
For behind the parent stood the school,
and behind the teacher, the home.

- Unknown Author
Aspen Birthday Walk Information Sheet

We do a birthday walk for each child on or near their birthday, if they would like to participate. We understand some families choose not to celebrate birthdays- that is okay. Summer birthdays that occur after school lets out will be celebrated at the end of the year before school ends. Your help with this information sheet will make it possible to personalize the experience for your child. Feel free to join us if you can. Please return this completed form in your child’s homework folder in one week. Thank you.

Birthday (including year): __________________________________________

Full name: _______________________________________________________

Place of birth: __________________________________________________

Current Hometown: ________________________________________________

Parents’ names: _________________________________________________

Siblings’ names and ages: _________________________________________

Pets’ names: _____________________________________________________

Hobbies or activities: _____________________________________________

Significant information about day of birth: __________________________

One significant event from each year of life:

Birth to age 1:

1-2:

2-3:

3-4:

4-5:

5-6:

6-7:

7-8:

8-9:

Any additional information your child would like to share with the class: __________________________________________
Why Montessori?

The Importance of the Early Years

Dr. Montessori, one of the most important educators of our time, emphasized the need for early education. She wrote,

"The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to age six. For that is the time when man’s intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed. But not only his intelligence; the totality of his psychic powers...at no other age has the child greater need of an intelligent help, and any obstacle that impedes his creative work will lessen the chance he has of achieving perfection".

The Real Needs of the Child

Montessori attitudes and philosophy are most consistent with the needs of a child in the process of developing and learning. Montessori’s educational theories are based on the way a child develops naturally and are then correlated for use as an educational system consistent with these laws.

Child Centered

Dr. Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person. People teach themselves. A truly educated individual continues learning long after the hours and years spent in a classroom because he or she is motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love for knowledge. She felt therefore, that the goal of early education should not be to fill children with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate their own natural desire to learn. Her experiments made the child the center of education; her program is adapted to the interests and needs of children. As a result, children concentrate with enthusiasm and achieve a real and profound understanding of their work. This intellectual prowess is accompanied by emotional growth. The children become harmonious in movement, independent in work, and honest and helpful with one another.

Phases of Growth

Dr. Montessori discovered, and recent educational research has verified successive phases of growth in children each with characteristic sensitivities which guide physical and mental development. These phases of growth, she called "sensitive periods". They are outwardly recognizable by an intense interest
which the child shows for certain sensorial and abstract experiences. Dr. Montessori discovered that the guiding sensitivities constitute needs in the child which demand fulfillment and are universal to all children. Thus, the validity of Dr. Montessori’s observations have remained constant since she began her task of the discovery of the child.

The Role of the Teacher

The function of the teacher in a Montessori classroom differs considerably from that of the traditional teacher, hence, Dr. Montessori used the term “Directress”. The directress brings children into contact with the world in which they live and the tools by which they learn to cope with the world. She is, first of all a very keen observer of the individual interests and needs of each child; her daily plan proceeds from her observations rather than from a prepared curriculum. She demonstrates the correct use of materials as they are individually chosen by the children, carefully watches the progress and keeps a record of their work. Individual children’s total development as well as their progress toward self-discipline is carefully guided by the directress, who prepares the environment directs the activities, and offers each child enticement and stimulation. The mutual respect of the student and the teacher-guide is the most important factor in this process.

The Ungraded Classroom

The greatest possibility for flexibility in permitting individual lessons and progress, while still retaining group sessions at no expense to the individual child exists in the Montessori environment. The use of individual materials permits a varied pace that accommodates many levels or abilities in the classroom. If the classroom equipment is to be challenging enough to provoke a learning response, it must be properly matched to the sensitivities of each child. The most satisfying choice can usually be made only by the children themselves. The Montessori classroom offers children the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of graded materials. The child can grow as their interests lead them from one level of complexity to another. They work in a group composed of individuals of various ages, abilities, cultures and interests and are not required to follow anyone else’s program... it permits the younger children a graded series of models for imitation, and the older ones an opportunity to reinforce their own knowledge by helping the younger ones- hence, they add to the group as they receive from it what they need.
Montessori at a Glance

Montessori education has achieved worldwide recognition and success. This condensed explanation will acquaint you with the many advantages that Montessori offers your child.

- The Montessori Method has been time-tested for 75 years and has achieved success throughout the world with children.
- Montessori is a totally positive environment for children.
- In the scientifically prepared environment of the true Montessori school, the child develops the prime elements of character: freedom, independence, self-discipline, industry, and sense of reality in an atmosphere of cooperation.
- Each child is taught individually.
- The child’s natural development of language is utilized in the process of learning to read.
- Children work at their own pace and at their own level.
- Children have the unique opportunity to fulfill their potential. Habits and skills developed in a Montessori classroom remain for a lifetime.
- The Montessori classroom is a land of opportunity for the child as well as a truly joyful place to be.
- Although much has been said about the academic achievements of Montessori children, the true value lies in the self-discipline, self-mastery and love of learning that children achieve.

What is the Montessori Method?

Montessori is a philosophy and method of education which emphasizes the potential of the young child and which develops this potential by utilizing specially trained teachers and special teaching materials. Montessori recognizes in children a natural curiosity and desire to learn; the Montessori Materials awaken this desire and channel that curiosity into a learning experience which children enjoy.

Montessori Materials help children to understand what they learn by associating an abstract concept with a concrete sensorial experience; in this manner, the Montessori child is actually learning and not just memorizing. The Montessori Method stresses that children learn and progress at their own pace so that fast
learners are not held back, and slow learners are not frustrated by their inability to keep up.

What is Montessori Apparatus?

The Montessori classroom offers 500 unique educational didactic (self-teaching) materials which are manipulated by the children in the classroom. They accommodate many levels of ability. They are not “teaching aids” in the traditional sense, because their goal is not the external one of teaching children skills or imparting knowledge through “correct usage”. Rather, the goal is an internal one of aiding the child’s mental development and self-construction. They aid this growth by providing stimuli that captures the child’s attention and initiates a process of concentration. Children then use the apparatus to develop coordination, attention to details, and good work habits. When the environment offers materials that polarize children...the teacher is then able to give the freedom needed for healthy development.

Why Should You Send Your Child to a Montessori School?

Montessori is education...not a pre-school. The best time to start your child’s education is during the early years. 2 ½ to 3 years is when most of a child’s intelligence and social characteristics are formed. 50% of the child’s mental development occurs before 4 years of age. In a Montessori school, your child will learn to think in logical patterns and to deal with reality. Children with a Montessori background become better prepared to cope with the complex challenges of tomorrow’s world.

What Does Montessori Offer My Child?

Montessori allows children to experience the excitement of learning by their own choice. Dr. Montessori observed that it was easier for a child to learn a particular skill during the corresponding “sensitive periods” than at any other time in life. These are periods of intense fascination for learning a particular skill. Montessori allows children the freedom to select individual activities which correspond to their own periods of interest and readiness and to progress at their own pace. A child who acquires the basic skills of reading and arithmetic in this natural way has the advantage of beginning education without drudgery, boredom, or discouragement.