

Survey Backgrounder – Montessori Philosophy and Values

One of the purposes of the Pacific Montessori Society is to operate a private, non-profit Montessori school and daycare where students may obtain an education of the highest quality according to the findings of Dr. Maria Montessori and subsequent modern educational research. In order to do this, we use the Montessori philosophy or method of education.

Many of our families join the Selkirk Montessori School because they have researched and believe that the Montessori philosophy of education will best meet their child's needs. Some families join our school because of our reputation in the community, and come to understand the philosophy in time.

Montessori Philosophy/Method

According to the American Montessori Society (AMS):

The Montessori Method of education, developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, is a child-centered educational approach based on scientific observations of children from birth to adulthood. Dr. Montessori's Method has been time tested, with over 100 years of success in diverse cultures throughout the world.

It is a view of the child as one who is naturally eager for knowledge and capable of initiating learning in a supportive, thoughtfully prepared learning environment. It is an approach that values the human spirit and the development of the whole child—physical, social, emotional, cognitive.

Hallmarks of Montessori

Components necessary for a program to be considered authentically Montessori include multiage groupings that foster peer learning, uninterrupted blocks of work time, and guided choice of work activity. In addition, a full complement of specially designed Montessori learning materials are meticulously arranged and available for use in an aesthetically pleasing environment.

The teacher, child, and environment create a learning triangle. The classroom is prepared by the teacher to encourage independence, freedom within limits, and a sense of order. The child, through individual choice, makes use of what the environment offers to develop himself, interacting with the teacher when support and/or guidance is needed.

Multiage groupings are a hallmark of the Montessori Method: younger children learn from older children; older children reinforce their learning by teaching concepts they have already mastered. This arrangement also mirrors the real world, where individuals work and socialize with people of all ages and dispositions.

Dr. Montessori observed that children experience sensitive periods, or windows of opportunity, as they grow. As their students develop, Montessori teachers match appropriate lessons and materials to these sensitive periods when learning is most naturally absorbed and internalized. In early childhood, Montessori students learn through sensory-motor activities, working with materials that develop their cognitive powers through direct experience: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and movement.

In the elementary years, the child continues to organize his thinking through work with the Montessori learning materials and an interdisciplinary curriculum as he passes from the concrete to the abstract. He begins the application of his knowledge to real-world experiences. This organization of information—facts and figures—prepares the child for the world of adolescence, when thought and emotion evolve into understanding more abstract, universal concepts such as equity, freedom, and justice.

Benefits of Montessori

Montessori students learn to think critically, work collaboratively, and act boldly—a skill set for the 21st century.

Values

Montessorians share common values. Check out any Montessori website and you will find similar lists of core values. The AMS lists their values as respect, integrity, diversity, inclusiveness, responsibility and enthusiasm. The Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) highlights peace and kindness, justice and respect for the needs and welfare of others as core values. These are the two most important organizations in the Montessori movement.

These are the stated values of the Pacific Montessori Society and the Selkirk Montessori School:

- compassion and kindness
- safety and security in a caring school environment
- inclusion of diverse perspectives and cultures
- respect for life and the environment
- honesty and integrity
- striving for excellence in everything we do
- peace and cooperation throughout our local and global community
- leadership within our school community and beyond
- independence and confidence

Our Selkirk Montessori School Vision, Mission and Values are shared on our website (under School Community) and in the Family Handbook we review with you when you first join the school.