

What is Montessori

The first Montessori school was set up by Maria Montessori in 1907. She was Italy's first female doctor. Montessori has now become the world's largest education movement. Fundamental to the approach is the belief that a child's early years – from birth to six – are the period when they have the greatest capacity to learn.

How does it differ from traditional education?

What makes the approach different, and what makes it work so well, is that it is based on a deep understanding of the way children learn – through choosing, trying and doing themselves. It allows children to discover things individually using all five senses and through understanding, rather than being told. From understanding comes confidence and a joy in learning. We believe that children shouldn't be pressurised at a young age and learning at their own pace is much more effective for their future education. Montessori classrooms are often noted for special pieces of equipment, many of which were created by Maria Montessori. The learning materials are all carefully designed to help children understand where they may have gone wrong and to enable them to work out ways of correcting themselves without being "told" how to do so. There is a strong physical dimension to many Montessori activities, encouraging dexterity, balance and appreciation of shapes, colours and sizes. Children are given freedom to select activities appropriate for their learning from open shelves. A study showed that Montessori children have a high level of cognitive attainment at age 5 - above the national average. They also demonstrate excellent levels of positive social and behavioural development, and have a strong sense of self-esteem.



5 Areas of the Montessori Curriculum

Practical life: This area prepares the child indirectly for all other areas of the curriculum with order, concentration, coordination and independence. Exercises include pouring, sorting, food preparation, care of self, and care of the environment.

Sensorial: Through exploration of the various materials of changeable dimension, colour, shape, texture, smell, and taste, all the faculties of intelligence are developed. The sensorial area also includes geometry as the subject is introduced to the child through their senses.

The Language Area: The early years are a sensitive period for language achievement. The language curriculum includes oral language activities, pre-reading work, writing and reading comprehension. The development of listening skills, comprehension and vocabulary.

Mathematics: This area is a powerful learning tool for developing a strong foundation it focuses on the fundamental skills to calculate. The program creates a concrete basis of math skills that are invaluable for future learning. Activities cover recognition of math patterns, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, short and long, fraction work and skip counting.

Cultural Learning: The children gain a broad exposure to many different areas of science. For example, they develop an initial understanding of the difference between living and non-living things. The children learn fun facts about spiders, insects and other animals. They also learn about the earth (continents, countries, and oceans), and the solar system.