What is Montessori?

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A bit about me..

- Supposed to be a radiologist
- Became a family child care provider
- Worked nationally and locally for more stringent regulation
- Became involved with CT Charts a Course
- Went back to school for Elementary Education
- Found Montessori
A Few Facts

- Most Montessori Schools have no religious affiliation.
- Montessori Schools are competitively priced.
- Montessori students transition well into traditional educational environments.
- Montessori Schools proudly celebrates a diverse student body representing many cultures.
- We are not just for “gifted’ or “special needs” children
- There is freedom within structure
Famous Alumni

Sergey Brin & Larry Page, Founders of Google
Jimmy Wales, Creator of Wikipedia
Jeff Bezos, Financial Analyst, Founder of Amazon
Will Wright, Video Game Designer and Creator of SimCity, The Sims
George Clooney, Actor
Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Nobel Prize winner for Literature
Peter Drucker, entrepreneur and business management expert
Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Editor, Former First Lady (John F. Kennedy)
T. Berry Brazelton, Pediatrician and author
Sean Combs, Music producer
Anne Frank, Author of The Diary of Anne Frank
Dakota Fanning - Actress
Prince William and Prince Harry, British Royal Family
Julia Child, Chef, star of many TV cooking shows, and author
Melissa Gilbert and Sarah Gilbert, Actresses
Katherine Graham, Owner/Editor of The Washington Post
John Cusak and Joan Cusak, actors
Friedensreich Hundertwasser, Austrian painter/Architect
History of Montessori

- Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), Italy’s first female physician
- Started her work with children when she took a position at the psychiatric clinic of the University of Rome where she worked with and observed special needs children.
- She then began to develop a pedagogy to educate these children and later refined it for broader application.
- Focuses on the development of the whole child
- Teaches children to become problem solvers & critical thinkers
The Montessori Model

The Montessori education is premised upon the following basic elements:

- A highly skilled educator
- A respect for the child through individualized education
- Sequenced learning through specially designed, hands-on materials
- A child-oriented, prepared environment
100 years later...

Montessori schools can be found around the world, following those same principles used in that first classroom.
Classroom

To enter a Montessori classroom is to enter a world especially prepared for the comfort and stimulation of the child.

It’s a carefully designed environment where children of mixed ages work together, or independently, with multi-sensory materials that invite them to touch, to think, and to experience.

Children move freely about, choose an activity and work on it until a sense of accomplishment is achieved. Before the child may move on to a different activity, the child needs to put their materials back in the proper place.

With the freedom to choose, children develop self-confidence, a sense of order, independence, self-discipline and self mastery. In this environment, children work with a concentration rarely seen at preschool age.
In a Montessori classroom the teacher is more a facilitator than an instructor. The teacher serves as the link between the student and the learning environment, observing each child’s progress, then introducing the next step to enable the child to master a skill.
Three important principles:

- **Repetition**
  - The child can repeat an activity, which aids concentration and leads to mastery.

- **Movement**
  - The child can walk around the room of his or her own will. Movement is also essential in many of the activities as it aids learning.

- **Choice**
  - The child may choose which activity he or she would like to do.
SensiAve

Periods

Maria Montessori’s observed the occurrence of periods when the child has an especially strong sensitivity towards a particular piece of knowledge or skill.

The sensitivity lasts for a certain period and does not reoccur.

It is a time in which the child concentrates mainly on one aspect of his environment and excludes everything else. It is a time of

Teachers used as basic guidelines as to when a child is ready to learn and when to introduce certain items to children.

This can also be determined by observing the child for when they are focused on a certain type of work and follow the child’s interest.

The following are the Sensitive Periods for Children Aged from Birth to 6 years of Age:

- Sensitive Period for Order (age 18 months to 2 yrs)
- Sensitive Period for Language (birth to 6 yrs)
- Sensitive Period for Movement (birth to 4 yrs)
- Sensitive Period for Refinement of the Senses (birth to 5 yrs)
- Sensitive Period for Weaning (5 to 6 months)
- Sensitive Period for Numbers (4 to 5.5 yrs)
- Sensitive Period for Manners and Courtesies (2 to 6 yrs)
The Prepared Environment

“Everything should be in proportion to the size of the child...The clear, lighted rooms, with little low windows, wreathed in flowers, with small pieces of furniture of every shape just like the furniture of a nicely furnished home.”

—Montessori, The Secret of Childhood
How it works?

- **Control of movement**: the child needs to move carefully around the classroom.

- **Limitations** on number of activities (there is only one set of each activity— with a few exceptions.) each having a built in control of error.

- **Concentration** does wonderful things. When a child concentrates he or she is calm and quiet and able to learn.
Children need organized learning environments and educational materials that provide enriching meaningful experiences to support their cognitive development.
Research

World-Renowned Pediatric Neuropsychologist

Dr. Steven Hughes

Do you know...
Most critical periods for brain development are over by age 6?
What does a child do all day?

The four major areas taught in Montessori schools are:

- **Practical life**: exercises such as sweeping, pouring water, polishing, cutting, painting, etc.

- **Sensorial**: use of equipment designed to focus in on each of our senses, which allows children to develop a more acute sensitivity to their surroundings.

- **Language**: development of hand-eye coordination to be able to hold and use a pencil properly, the ability to trace shapes (helps with letter formation), letter sounds, word exposure (learning the different parts of a plant, animal, person, etc.)

- **Math**: The use of beads, wooden rods and other Montessori equipment helps children learn and enhance their understanding of numbers before they move on to more difficult mathematical concepts.

Children also explore subjects such as science and nature, music, art, geography, history, and creative movement. In addition, most Montessori schools offer lessons in foreign language as part of the curriculum.
Practical Life

Practical life is where all children are first attracted. These activities create an important foundation. The works are designed to build order, concentration, coordination and independence in the child.
Sensorial

1st developed for Special needs students in asylum

Montessori talks about teaching without distraction. This means to Focus on one attribute at a time.

Special needs students were learning above expectations

Decided to work with children without disability.
Language

The language materials are designed to make learning to read and write spontaneous occurrences of great joy for the child.

• Begins with spoken language
• The child will start to write before he or she reads
• Reading begins with phonetics and then quickly moves on to “total reading”
The moveable alphabet
Stages of Writing
Math Materials

Everything in Montessori begins with concrete and moves towards abstraction. The Math materials are no different. We teach quantity, then symbol, one to one correspondence, then the decimal system and linear counting. The materials help to move the child to further abstraction so the child begins to perform basic operations in his or her head.
Cultural Studies

Different at each school

- Three year cycle
- Two continents a year
- Appreciate and recognize the differences in cultures with cooking, crafts, presentations, & literature.
Spreading the Word

Every nine seconds of each school day, a young person drops out of high school in the U.S. Daniel Petter-Lipstein has a recommendation.

His recommendation isn’t cutting edge or based on modern technology. Lipstein believes that the Montessori Method, which was developed in the early 20th century, is a “superb educational model” that could help brighten our future. In his article, titled *Superwoman Was Already Here*, Lipstein shares his passion for Montessori education from a parent’s perspective and explains why he feels so strongly about Montessori education.

Lipstein says “Our public education system needs radical transformation. Every child has gifts and talents that should be nurtured and we are wasting vast oceans of human ability and potential with our current system.” Lipstein acknowledges that there is no silver bullet that would solve all of our educational challenges. However, he firmly believes that millions of “American children could benefit from this extraordinary approach to teaching and learning.” Maria Montessori did her part and now it’s up to us to inspire the next generation. Who’s ready to take America by storm and show them what Montessori is all about?