



Montessori Kindergarten: Putting it all together



Children typically enter the Montessori classroom at age three and stay through the kindergarten year. Dr. Montessori was one of the first educators to conceive of a children's house, a place that was made with child-sized furniture, designed so that children could become masters of their environment. Independence is paramount, with the adults acting as guides in a carefully prepared learning environment.

"A child who has become master of his acts through long and repeated exercises, and who has been encouraged by the pleasant and interesting activities, in which he has been engaged, is a child filled with health and joy and remarkable for his calmness and discipline." Dr. Montessori

'The Discovery of the Child', Clio Press Ltd, 92

The first-year students are explorers; they build concentration and attention span, a sense of order, and refine their coordination skills. In the second year, the children use the skills they developed in their first year to expand on basic concepts and develop socialization skills. The Kindergarten year in Montessori fosters mastery in early reading and math skills while the brain gradually



develops abstract thought processes and becoming leaders in the classroom. The Montessori classroom also gives children an opportunity to move around, socialize with friends, and work at their own pace, moving from more mentally challenging tasks to activities that test their



motor skills. Modern brain research tells us that children learn through play and movement. Young children are still very concrete thinkers, and benefit from the hands-on materials in the classroom.



Developmental psychologist Howard Gardner introduced the world to the idea of multiple intelligences. Instead of only seeing the value in linguistic or logical-mathematical thinking, Gardner determined that there were eight intelligences that humans need to develop. Even though Dr. Montessori developed her philosophy decades before Gardner's work, the Montessori environment utilizes all the intelligences. Vardin, Patricia. "Montessori and Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences." *Montessori Life*, Winter 2 003.



Intelligence	Characteristics	Features of Montessori
Linguistic	syntax, phonics, stories, writing, reading	Language- rich environment; enriched vocabulary, phonics instruction
Logical-Mathematical	patterns, calculations, numbers, relations	Math and Geometry curriculum; Sensorial materials
Musical	songs, pitch, rhythm	Daily classroom singing; music instruction– rhythm/ bells
Body-Kinesthetic	skillful object handling, control of body motions	Practical Life fine and gross motor activities; outdoor play
Spatial	mental visualization and transformation of objects	Sensorial visual discrimination materials including tower of cubes, constructive triangles, etc.
Interpersonal	Awareness of others, group dynamics	Peace curriculum and direct instruction on social relations; family connections; Cultural Geography
Intrapersonal	Awareness of one's own feelings and desires	Peace curriculum and emphasis on respect of feelings
Naturalist	Recognition and classification of the environment	Emphasis on nature, biology lessons, outdoor experiences, gardening, animal care