

Fundamental Principles of Montessori Schools

Principle 1: Classes in Montessori Schools are mixed-age and non-graded.

- Mixed-age classes comprise at least three-year groupings corresponding to the Planes of Development: 3 – 6; 6 – 9 and 9 – 12 or 6 – 12; 12 – 15 and 15 – 18 or 12 – 18.
- Mixed-age groups are not correlated to grades, nor are they divided in other ways according to achievement levels or normative standards.

Principle 2: Montessori schools accommodate an extended period of uninterrupted self-chosen activity – a period during which children can choose their own activity and work undisturbed for a minimum of three hours.

Principle 3: Rewards and Punishments are not used in a Montessori environment.

Principle 4: A prepared environment is a critical component of Montessori Pedagogy.

The prepared environment

- Serves the developmental and pedagogical needs of the children using it;
- Supports freedom of movement, speech and association;
- Supports free choice of activity;
- Facilitates normalization and valorization;
- Includes a full range of Montessori materials appropriate to the age for which it is prepared.

Principle 5: The adults in the Montessori environment exhibit and apply the principles of Montessori pedagogy through

- A disposition of respect and patience towards the child;
- An ability to balance the principle of non-intervention while at the same time not abandoning the child;
- Trust in Montessori principles, methodology and pedagogical aims;
- Seeing the role of the adult as primarily observer, scientist and interpreter of the environment rather than as a teacher in the conventional sense;
- Guiding the child to normalization and development appropriate to each Plane of Development.

Principle 6: Montessori schools develop curriculum guidelines which conform to the vision of child development and the educative goals outlined by Maria Montessori.

Principles adopted at the 2011 SAMA AGM