

Questions Often Asked About Montessori

What is the Montessori method?

It is an approach to education which emphasizes the potential of the young child and which develops this potential by means of a unique teaching strategy. It utilizes specially trained teachers and special teaching materials. It is a method of teaching that develops the intellect and the stability of a child beginning with two and one-half year old.

This method not only develops the intellect of the child but also provides the proper conditions for the young child to develop physically, mentally, emotionally and socially.

What is the “absorbent mind?”

Dr. Montessori was so impressed with the ability of the young child to absorb knowledge that she called the mind of the child the “absorbent mind.”

What are the “sensitive periods?”

This is Dr. Montessori’s name for age periods when the child shows unusual capabilities in acquiring particular skills. A modern name for the phenomenon might be “periods of specific maturational aptness.” The sensitive period for writing is between 3-1/2 and 4-1/2 years, words leading to reading and numbers 4 to 5 years, and precise movement and coordination 2-1/2 to 4 years. Dr. Montessori found that a child was able to absorb more readily different subjects at different ages or periods of growth.

What is the Montessori concept of discipline?

The Montessori discipline is a “inner discipline” --control which the child develops over his own behavior through his interest in the Montessori materials, positive social orientation, and in caring for both materials and individuals. Dr. Montessori noted that many so-called “undisciplined” children were really frustrated by lack of proper stimulation and would become happier and self-controlled after a period of time in a Montessori class. When a child’s intellectual energies are utilized in a constructive manner there is no energy left over for mischievousness or deviation. This is true “inner discipline.” This is true Montessori behavior.

How many grades do Montessori schools have?

Montessori schools are upgraded. Children from 2-1/2 through 5 years are in the primary class, ages 6 to 9 in the junior class, and ages 9 to 12 in the elementary class. Each age group overlaps according to the particular child concerned. An important factor in Montessori schools is the three year age range which allows positive give-and-take between younger and older children. There are a few Montessori schools in the United States which continue through high school.

What happens to children that transfer from a Montessori school to a public school?

The Montessori children adapt to their environment wherever they find themselves. Montessori children develop high degree of self-discipline and independence in the Montessori classroom which aids in the transition. A great deal depends upon the public school involved, the teachers, and the individual.