

Purpose

“Help me to do it by myself” a Montessori axiom. The child must educate himself. The adult prepares the environment and assists in the guidance of the child, but it is the child that works for the development and completion of skills and the creation of the man that he is to become.

The Montessori concept of education allows the children to experience the joy of learning at an early age while preserving the spontaneity, initiative, and curiosity inherent in every child. This concept promotes the development of independence, concentration and self-discipline, and fosters love and respect for others and the environment. The Montessori experience provides the child with “preparation for life”.

Historical Basis

Dr. Montessori was born in 1870 in the town of Chiaravalle, Italy. In 1895 she received the first medical degree to be granted to a woman from the University of Rome. With the establishment of the “Casa de Bambini” in 1905, Dr. Montessori observed the plight of children in their educational development and dedicated herself to their needs. Over a 40 year period she developed her approach to education and became one of the most internationally admired, influential and controversial women of the twentieth century.

Administration

ADMINISTRATOR: Susan Young has a B.A. Degree in Child Psychology and holds an AMI Montessori certificate. She has been involved with children in various forms of preschool for over 35 years. The last 30 of those years have been in Montessori. She started out as an assistant in a Montessori classroom. Susan was a Toddler teacher for two years and she taught the primary class for seven years.

Montessori School Standards

Montessori School of Novato strives to maintain the highest standards in its application of the philosophy and techniques developed by Dr. Montessori. To accomplish this, the Montessori School of Novato practices the theories and techniques established by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). Our head teachers are AMI or AMS trained and our teachers all have at least 12 Early Childhood Education units.

UNGRADED CLASSES: A necessary requirement for a Montessori school at the primary level to function correctly is that it contain children of varying ages from 2 ½ to 5.

MONTESSORI MATERIALS: The Montessori School must operate with completely equipped classrooms that contain all the authorized Montessori materials and apparatus. These scientifically designed teaching materials form the basic structure of the learning program. In addition, classrooms contain many teacher-made materials. Additionally, in order to implement the Montessori program, the Montessori School of Novato selects its staff members for their maturity, experience, talent, skill, and sensitivity to children.

Although the Montessori environment does provide opportunity for early learning (reading, writing, and mathematical calculations) the Montessori School of Novato

believes that the very essence of the Montessori Method is in the total development of the child. This development is directed toward establishing a firm foundation of self-reliance, self-confidence, and self-discipline while preserving the innate curiosity, motivation, and love for learning that lie inherent in each individual child. The Montessori environment provides this happy atmosphere for the child.

Child and Classroom

VISIT: Children, parents, and teachers visit together for a short time before the first day of school. This helps alleviate any special fears and provides an opportunity to meet with teachers and other children.

FIRST DAY: On your child's first day at school alone, please bid him/her with a cheerful "good-bye" and leave him/her with the teacher. A prolonged departure can be difficult. New activities will soon interest the child.

NEW CHILDREN ALL-DAY: New children under the age of 4 years attending the all-day session may need to be gradually introduced to the longer day. Please, be aware of how your child is responding the first few weeks of school.

EXTRA HOURS: If you need to drop off early or pick up your child later than your scheduled pick-up time, you must contact the school and ask if we will be able to accommodate your child. Teacher to Student ratio is determined according to the scheduled drop off and pick up times, we may not have the staff to accommodate your child. If you are early or late, you will be charged an extra fee in ½ hour increments.

EXTRA CLOTHING: On visiting day please bring a plastic box with lid containing extra socks, underpants, pants, and shirt to be left at school. **All clothing must be labeled with the child's name.**

SLIPPERS: All children change out of their shoes and into slippers before entering the classroom. This helps keep the classes cleaner and quieter. Please send to school a pair of slippers that will stay at school each day. Most children wear crocs as these are easy to put on and take off. **Slippers should be void of superheroes and other characters.**

DRESS: Dress should be simple, comfortable and appropriate to the weather. Tennis shoes are acceptable. Your child should be able to remove his or her clothes easily for the bathroom. Names should be placed on all clothes including, underpants, sweaters, and jackets. **So the child is free to be himself at school, we ask that no T-shirts with pictures of superheroes or cartoon characters be worn at school.** These can be a distraction in the classroom. Cowboy boots, clogs or floppy sandals **should** not be worn. They are dangerous on the play equipment and noisy indoors. We ask that each child bring a pair of slippers to be worn in the classroom.

BIRTHDAYS: We feel that a child's birthday should be a very special day. We would appreciate the parent reminding the teacher of the child's birthday so that no one is overlooked.

On this day, it might be nice if the child brought a favorite item to share, ie: book, to share with the class. Also, we would appreciate it if the child brought some pictures of when he or she was a baby and a short story of his/her life. The teacher will be sure to take a special time during the day to recognize your child and whatever he or she brings. If you would like to bring cookies or a special snack (small cupcakes or muffins etc.) in recognition of your child's birthday, they will be served to the class during the mid-morning snack. **Please do not bring candy.**

HOLIDAY PARTIES: There will be holiday parties in the classroom during the school year. The children will make some of the snacks for these parties but the parents may ask the teacher if there is anything they can contribute. Many times we need napkins, juice, etc. The parties will be for the following holidays: Halloween, the day before Thanksgiving, before Winter break, before Spring break and the last day of the school year. The parties are kept simple.

TOYS: *Please, do not allow your child to bring toys to school.* The Montessori environment provides for the child's needs at school. Items of special interest such as flowers, seeds, books, pictures, cd's, rocks, shells, and insects are always welcome. Please make arrangements with the teacher if your child should wish to bring an animal or pet.

LOST: Lost Montessori apparatus – from time to time, the children become much attached to small pieces of Montessori apparatus and take them home. We would very much appreciate your checking your child's pockets and washing machine and sending whatever you may find back to the school. Incomplete materials must be removed from the classroom until the missing pieces are replaced.

PROBLEMS: Please let us know when your child needs extra attention for any reason – illness in the family, new baby, financial crisis, moving, etc. We will make every effort to assist in easing his or her anxieties. If you feel your child has a problem at school, or if you have any complaint, please contact us so that we can take appropriate action.

Health and Care

FOOD: A snack consisting of a variety of whole grains, dairy, fresh fruits or vegetables will be served each morning session. Canned, frozen, or processed foods and drinks, those containing sugar additives or coloring will be avoided as much as possible. Excess fruit or vegetables from home gardens would be most appreciated, especially citrus for the practical life exercises.

LUNCH: Children in the all day session bring their own lunches. **Candy &/or gum should never be sent to school.** Fruits or dried fruit are encouraged for your child's dessert. Lunch boxes are preferred over lunch bags. This way uneaten food will be returned each day so that parents will be able to adjust the amount of food for their child. Hot food may be sent in thermos bottles. We do **NOT** heat up food. Please send eating utensils (when necessary) and two napkins in your child's lunch every day.

PLAYGROUND: Outdoor time is a very important part of your child's day and we make every effort to give the children ample outdoor time. They have a half hour in the morning and then a half hour to forty five minutes after lunch. Children who stay past 2:30 have another hour outside. When the weather is very hot or cold we may cut the time outside short or adjust the schedule so the children are out when the weather isn't as extreme. If it is raining lightly we may let the children go outside for a short time. We encourage boots and raincoats for the playground on these days.

BEDDING: A facility is provided for children attending all day sessions that want or need a nap. A rest mat, sheet and blanket will be provided for the child to use. The staff will wash the nap blankets and sheets every Friday. Your child can bring a special blanket if he/she wants, but it will have to stay at the school until the end of the week.

ID AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION: A pink identification and emergency information sheet must be on file each year before your child starts school. Please return it promptly.

IMMUNIZATION: California State law requires that each child have on file a record of immunization for Polio, DPT, MMR, and Varivax (Chickenpox). The law provides for exclusion of the child from school if the records are not on file.

MEDICATION: Medication should not be left at school or sent in your child's lunch box. You may send **prescribed** medication to school marked with the child's name and dosage, along with written permission to administer at a given time. Please use the school's form (pink medication form). The teacher will dispense all medication. No more than one week's dosage will be accepted. Medication must be handed directly to the teacher. **No over the counter medication (Tylenol, cough medicine, etc.) will be accepted or given to the children without a doctor's orders.**

HEALTH PROCEDURE:

1. The parent should notify the school by phone when the child is absent due to illness. Please message through the Brightwheel app before 8:30am
2. A Communicable Disease Notice will be posted when applicable, with pertinent information circled.
3. When a child has been ill, a note should be returned by the parent or the parent can speak directly to the teacher describing the duration, cause and type of illness. This will assist the teacher in observing the child and his/her activities when he returns. The teacher will watch for signs of fatigue.
4. A serious illness or injury warrants a physician's report stating that the child is ready to return to school.
5. A child who has been ill or seriously injured should have the parent accompany him/her when returning to school in order to brief the directress at the door and allow for an observation of the child to determine his/her readiness to return.
6. A child who appears infectious or contagious should be kept at home. Watch, in particular for the following symptoms: thick, colored mucus, hoarse, hacking

- cough, hot feverish brow, abnormally flushed or ashen skin, pale, listless, with runny nose, watery eyes with the above. A cold by itself does not mean you have to keep your child home. We are more concerned with the comfort of your child. If he/she is not feeling well and would prefer to be at home that is where he/she belongs.
7. If a child is continually sent to school with any of the above symptoms, perhaps a physical is due, his/her health habits need to be changed, or he/she needs to remain home until completely cleared of all symptoms.
 8. We encourage and promote good hand washing habits with the children. This is one way to control the spread of illness.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE: Even in the best-run schools, accidents happen. Despite the most careful supervision, a child can get hurt. So, the Montessori School of Novato carries a School Accident Policy which is underwritten by Hartford Accident & Indemnity which protects the children while attending school; while participating in or attending any regularly scheduled, approved and supervised group to and from the activity; and while traveling directly between their residences and the school when it is in session. All of the eligible children attending school are insured up to \$10,000 for accident and medical expenses for reasonable expenses actually incurred within 26 weeks after the date of the accident for treatment by a currently licensed physician or surgeon, hospital confinement, or the employment of a graduate or licensed nurse, up to \$10,000 for accidental dismemberment when injury does not result in accidental death, but does result in losses within 180 days after the date of the accident up to \$250 for dental expenses actually incurred within 26 weeks after the date of the accident.

EXCLUSIONS: The policy does not include any loss caused by or resulting from: declared or undeclared war or any act of war; injury for which the insured person is entitled to benefits under any worker's compensation act or law; or the expense of replacing eyeglasses or the prescriptions therefore. **PREMIUM:** The annual premium of \$15 (included in the annual registration fee) will be charged for each child who attends the school who is eligible for this insurance. Report all claims for insurance payment to the school within 10 days of the accident.

Family and School

The Montessori School of Novato maintains a policy of providing a climate conducive to a close cooperation between school and home. The teachers are always available before or after school and by phone or e mail. We request that e mail correspondence with the teachers be limited to simple requests for schedule changes or to let us know of an illness your child is suffering from. If there is a particular concern with your child or with something at the school we ask that you call the school and talk to your child's teacher or talk to the teacher in person at drop off or pick up. Parent/Teacher Conferences are done in February but if you have concerns at any time you can set up a conference with your child's teacher by calling them.

Discipline Statement

At Montessori School of Novato we believe in freedom within limits. Children are free to explore their environment and interact when they are ready. We allow children to go at their pace and we present new work to the children that will challenge them but not frustrate them. Our basic ground rules are: do not abuse the materials or each other. We teach respect for each other and we treat the children, as we want them to treat us.

Behavior is learned and we feel those good role models, whether it is a teacher or another child, are the best examples and forms of teaching good behavior.

Redirection is a big part of how we discipline the children. When a staff member sees a child acting up or a potential problem brewing he/she will try to redirect the child to another activity. We also try to teach the children to work things out for themselves by giving them the communication tools to do this. We teach the children how to express themselves and tell each other how they feel. When there is an argument between two children the teacher will observe to see if the children can work it out. The teacher will intervene immediately if one or both children are being harmed. The teacher will often sit down with both children and talk things out to solve the problem.

Logical consequences are discussed with the group of children as a whole so they know what will happen if rules are broken, i.e. if you throw sand you must come out of the sandbox, if you draw on the table the crayons will be put away, if you run in the classroom you will be asked to go back and walk. If a child is having trouble listening or continues to act inappropriately after reminders by the teacher the child is removed from the situation or activity for a short period of time (5minutes). The teacher then talks to the child about why she/he was removed and then he/she is invited to join the group again.

Parents are notified if their child is having a problem or even if he/she just has had a bad day. If the problem becomes persistent a parent/teacher conference may be set up. The school reserves the right to dismiss a child when it is determined that his/her negative behavior is affecting the rest of the children and taking up too much of one teacher's time and energy. We are willing to work with a child and his/her parents but there comes a time when we have to make the decision that this specific child's needs may no longer be met by the school.

PARENT/TEACHER APPOINTMENTS: If you wish to have a meeting with the administrator or teacher, please make an appointment. You may do so at any time, as it is the policy of the school to facilitate the highest degree of cooperation between staff and parents. In addition, the teacher is available daily at departure time for a short chat. Please be aware that we do not like to talk about the child when he/she is present. A telephone call is another way of communicating with the teacher. Please do not use e mail for these concerns. **You can reach us by using the special parent phone number 892-1982.**

PARENT CONFERENCES: In February of each year, parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for 20 minutes. Prior to the conference you will receive a notice indicating that they are coming up and you will be asked to sign up for a date and time.

PARENT/SCHOOL PICNIC: Each year a picnic is held on the last day of school in the evening. Parents, relatives, and staff get together at a local park.

Conditions of Enrollment

Brightwheel Billing: Tuition is paid monthly using an Electronic Funds transfer from your bank account. Tuition fees are annual broken into 10 monthly installments beginning in August and ending in May. Summer tuition is paid in June and July.

WITHDRAWAL: Your child may be withdrawn and the tuition agreement terminated by a written notice to the school. The notice will be effective not less than four weeks from the date it is received by the administrator. Tuition is refundable after the effective date of withdrawal on a pro-rated 180-day term basis. In consideration of the commitments the school must make in advance (staff etc.), tuition is not refundable for the first month of enrollment in the term and not for the absence of a child from school (long vacations, illness etc.).

TUITION: A statement showing the tuition payable, plus day care and other charges (extra time), if incurred, will be emailed on or before the 20th of each month and is due upon receipt. ***Tuition is an annual fee of ten (10) equal installments, August through May, based upon 180 school days.*** There will be a \$75.00 registration fee at the beginning of each school year. Summer school is a separate fee. Payments received after the 5th of each month are subject to a \$15.00 late charge. Checks returned for any reason are subject to a \$10.00 service charge.

EXTRA HOURS: If your child stays past his/her scheduled hours there will be a charge of \$9.00 for every ½ hour or portion of. The charge is \$10 for every 10 minutes after 5:30 PM. (Our closing time)

ADMISSIONS: Montessori School of Novato has a non-discriminatory policy of admission for children approximately two years through kindergarten. Admission is based on space availability and the agreement by staff and parents that the child is ready and will benefit from the classroom environment. When necessary, re-evaluation of the child and his or her relationship to the environment and/or to the other students may be made. Montessori of Novato reserves the right to ask any child to leave the school when the administration determines that the Montessori School of Novato Program is not suited to the child or if the child exhibits behavior which the school is not set up to handle. A child may be asked to leave if the parents are unwilling to support the school policies and philosophy (See Discipline Statement). Montessori School of Novato reserves the right to ask a child to leave if a tuition fee is delinquent.

Parents wishing to enroll their child must complete the following procedure:

1. Schedule a tour and observe the classroom in operation.
2. Fill out the online application.

3. Return completed registration materials:
 - Signed School Policy and Tuition agreement and Tuition Express Form
 - Physician's Health Report
 - Pre-admission Health Evaluation form completed by parent
 - California School Immunization Record
 - Pink Emergency and Identification Sheet
 - Medical Treatment Consent Form
 - Personal Rights Form
 - Parent's Rights Form
 - Parent Manual Form – Back Page signed
 - School Directory
 - Brightwheel App photo permission
 - Allergy list

If all classroom spaces are filled, your application will be kept on file and parents will be notified when space is available. Children will be selected on a first come basis unless choices must be made to ensure the age and gender ratios for optimum classroom balance.

BOOKS FOR PARENTS

Montessori, Maria

Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook
Education for a New World
From Childhood to Adolescence
The Secret of Childhood
The Absorbent Mind
Spontaneous Activity in Education
Discovery of the Child
The Child in the Family

Montessori, Mario - Education for Human Development

Stevenson – A note on Montessori's "The Secret of Childhood"

Mallory - Montessori and Your Child

Lillard – Montessori – A Modern Approach

Bower – Development in Infancy

Barnett – Montessori and Music

Faber & Mazlish – How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk

Healy – Your Child's Growing Mind

Endangered Minds- Why Children Don't Think and What We Can Do About It