

OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Montessori classroom (or environment) is designed to encourage the development of independence, cooperation and skills for daily living that enable each child to become a valued and independent member of our mini-community.

When parents first enter our environment, they will notice: -

- the natural beauty in the design of the environment;
- furniture, fixtures and fittings area child sized;
- learning materials are carefully displayed on open shelves;
- outdoor environment is natural and inviting.

CONTENT AREAS

The Montessori environment is divided into 5 content areas: -

1. Practical Life
2. Sensorial
3. Language
4. Mathematics
5. Cultural Studies



Practical Life

The Practical Life area is made up of exercises that focus on the care of self, others and the environment. Work in this area encourages the development of hand-eye coordination, gross motor skills and independence through care of self and care of environment activities. In the Practical Life curriculum area, children are also encouraged to participate in grace and courtesy exercises including flower arranging, preparing and serving food and managing personal space.

Sensorial

The Sensorial Area offers materials that are specifically designed to refine children's perception, discrimination and judgment of sensorial information. These materials help children to classify and order impressions through their senses: touch, sight, smell, taste, auditory, and exploring the physical properties of their environment.



OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



Language

The Montessori environment is rich in oral language opportunities - offering children the chance to engage in conversations, poetry, stories and music. The Language content area provides specific materials and activities which support the development of vocabulary, phonemic awareness, written language and reading skills.

Mathematics

The Mathematics area at Montessori Children's Centre includes activities which introduce children to mathematics concepts through the manipulation of concrete materials. Through work in the area, children can acquire a solid foundation of basic mathematical principles - which prepare them for later abstract reasoning.



Cultural Studies

In the Cultural Studies, children can explore exercises associated with geography, biology, zoology, art and music. Cultural Studies activities provide children with the opportunity to listen to stories and learn songs and dances from their own country and around the world, whilst participating in related visual arts activities. Children work with globes, maps, land and water forms and continent boxes with artifacts and pictures of life in different countries and cultures.

MIXED AGE GROUPING

Montessori Children's Centre programs are designed to cater for a multi-age grouping of children from the ages of 2 years to 6 years. This grouping operates very like a family environment, providing important learning and development opportunities in two ways:-



1. Encouraging children to aspire to the achievements of older peers - new students enter an established and mature environment with effective models of both work ethic and social interaction.
2. Encouraging children to take on mentoring roles - older children can learn to treat younger children with care and respect, providing them with opportunities to reinforce their own learning and understanding through 'peer teaching'.

MONTESSORI MATERIALS

Montessori materials are sets of objects, each designed to exacting specifications. In general, the materials are designed to capture interest, encourage precise use, extend concentration and challenge the intellect. In our environment, the Montessori materials for each content area are displayed on shelves in the order that they are presented to the children.

Children may choose from the shelf, at any time, the materials they know how to use. When children are shown how to use the materials, they are also shown how to handle the materials carefully and how to return them to the shelf once they have finished. This is known as a cycle of activity.



MONTESSORI TEACHERS

Montessori Teachers require specialist knowledge of childhood development.

The Montessori teacher's role is to connect the children with learning activities available in the learning environment. The teacher's role includes:-

- Preparing the environment and planning new work
- Linking the children to appropriate and challenging activities
- Leaving the children free to engage in an activity until their interest is satisfied and only assisting when required.
- Coordinating the dynamic balance between freedom and discipline.
- Recording the children's progress and achievement

Montessori Teachers are trained to observe childrens interests and activities carefully.

On the basis of these observations, Montessori Teachers introduce developmentally appropriate challenges introducing children to Montessori materials which are matched to their correct developmental needs and interests.

Montessori Teachers know the scope, sequence and use of the Montessori materials. This allows them to identify the learning activities required by individual children at each stage of their development. Teachers can also scaffold children's development using side-ways steps to consolidate ideas and concepts.

Montessori Childrens Centre employs educators who are dedicated professionals committed to and passionate about the Montessori approach to education. Our educators have a range of Montessori and early childhood qualifications, training and experience. We support our Educators both formally and informally to gain Montessori qualifications, and provide in-house training and support.

