

## THE MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Maria Montessori developed a theory of education and materials based on her observations and research that humans learn by doing, or through “hands on” experiences. Dr. Montessori discovered that humans from birth to 6 years of age have a special mind, “The Absorbent Mind”. During this time, each child can retain and absorb a greater amount of fact and experiences if offered at a young age and in a prepared environment. Dr. Montessori believed children should be placed in mixed aged environments to eliminate competition and foster a giving, learning environment where students help and teach one another. The teacher in a Montessori classroom leads the student to independence and individual excellence. The role of the instructor is to encourage academic and social development. This approach leads to the development of the “whole” child. In addition to academics, we foster grace and courtesy, care for oneself and the environment, art and music, and the development of self-esteem on a daily basis.

Montessori students learn to work independently and in groups. Students are encouraged to make decisions at an early age - providing children the opportunity to become problem solvers and learn how to manage their time effectively in the classroom. Maria Montessori believed the innate desire of humanity is to adapt and to become independent. Montessori classrooms support this theory.

Students are encouraged to exchange ideas and discuss their work freely with others. Researchers have shown that the best predictor of future success is a positive sense of self-esteem. Montessori programs, based on self directed, non-competitive activities, help children develop strong self images and the confidence to face challenges and change with optimism.