

MONTESSORI

In a
NUTSHELL



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FOR FLINT

The main concept of Montessori education is to promote the *joy of learning* in a *stimulating, child-oriented environment*.

A Montessori classroom is set up very differently from traditional classrooms. You will see:

- Room on the floor for students to roll out rugs and work alone or in small groups. This is because rather than having one lesson led by a teacher that everyone does at the same time, students choose materials to work with. When they are done, they put back the material and choose another.
- Students concentrating closely on their task. Montessori classrooms tend to have a calm, focused hum. To quote Maria Montessori, “The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, 'The children are now working as if I did not exist.'”
- Shelves that house the various materials students work with. There are six areas in a Montessori classroom:
 - Practical life materials teach self-reliance and independence. For young students, this helps improve hand strength and fine motor coordination, which are skills needed for writing.
 - Sensory materials develop students’ cognitive powers through direct experiences of hearing, tasting, smelling, touching and movement.
 - Math materials use tangible objects to sequentially build toward abstract math concepts, from place value to trinomial equations. In the elementary class, this includes a section on geometry.
 - Language arts materials (sometimes supplemented with additional reading supports) also use concrete objects to teach abstract ideas like grammar.
 - Science materials introduce botany, zoology, geology, and astronomy from an early age. Students are encouraged to follow their sense of curiosity and wonder by carefully observing and experimenting.
 - Culture and Geography materials, including puzzle maps, flags, and resources on people around the world help students see themselves as part of a larger human society.

The Montessori environment is a prepared classroom with materials that meet the student’s needs and interests, academic levels and developmental needs. The materials are introduced and demonstrated in a sequential manner laying the foundation for independent learning, fostering freedom within limits. In a public Montessori elementary program, students learn the same content as any other public school student, but the manner in which they learn it is different. ***The heart of the Montessori Method is the concept that mastery of a material is best achieved through exploration, imitation, repetition and trial and error.***

