Principles of Montessori Education

Montessori Education

The Montessori Method of education is based on Doctor Maria Montessori’s (1870-1952) scientific observations about how children learn as they progress from birth to adulthood. Montessori discovered that children avidly absorb information from their surroundings, and that if these surroundings provide opportunities for learning, that children would readily teach themselves. Over more than 50 years, Montessori perfected the teaching principles, key learnings, and educational materials that provided children with the optimal learning environment.

Respect for the child

The unique developmental needs and interests of each child are respected. Children are not compared based on merit, they are valued for their individuality. Montessori education embraces multiple styles and pathways to learning, and understands that each child’s early learning journey is different.

Sensitive Periods

Children pass through specific stages in their development when they are most able to learn specific skills. In Montessori education, these are called ‘[sensitive periods](https://montessoriacademy.com.au/how-to-recognise-and-support-sensitive-periods-in-your-childs-development/)‘. The Montessori learning environment supports these periods by proving children with hands-on learning experiences that encourage repetition and problem solving to maximise learning during these windows of opportunity.

The Absorbent Mind

The first six years of life are crucial in a child’s development as they establish an understanding of themselves and their world. The Montessori environment supports children in this task by providing them with learning experiences that promote their sense of belonging, confidence, independence and agency.

Teaching Roles

Children are the centre of the Montessori classroom. The role of the teacher is to observe and guide, being mindful of children’s changing interests, developmental needs, and emotions. Teachers plan daily lessons for each child.

Montessori Materials

[Montessori materials](https://montessoriacademy.com.au/montessori-education/montessori-materials/) are sensory-based learning tools that are designed to isolate one skill or concept. The materials encourage hands-on learning, independent problem solving, and analytical thinking. Especially unique, is that each Montessori material is designed with a visual control of error.

Prepared Environment

The Montessori classroom is a prepared environment designed to optimise learning. Characteristics include: low open shelves, left to right display of Montessori materials in progression order, defined curriculum areas, child-sized furniture, freedom of movement, and freedom of choice.

Three Hour Work Cycle

Students participate in a three-hour work cycle every day. This period of individual learning provides children with the opportunity to choose their work and progress at their own pace.

Five Curriculum Areas

The [Montessori Curriculum](https://montessoriacademy.com.au/montessori-education/montessori-curriculum/) is divided into five key areas of learning: Practical Life, Sensorial, Mathematics, Language and Culture. Each curriculum area has a dedicated space in the prepared environment.

Normalisation

[Normalisation](https://montessoriacademy.com.au/what-is-normalisation/) describes the process where young children come to focus and concentrate on a task for a sustained period of time. This period of development is characterized by: love of work, concentration, self-discipline, sociability.