

GENERAL FAQs

1. Where did Montessori come from?

Montessori education was founded in 1907 by Dr. Maria Montessori, the first woman in Italy to become a physician. She based her educational methods on scientific observation of children's learning processes. Guided by her discovery that children teach themselves, Dr. Montessori designed a "prepared environment" in which children could freely choose from a number of developmentally appropriate activities. Now, nearly a century after Maria Montessori's first casa dei bambini ("children's house") in Rome, Montessori education is found all over the world, spanning ages from birth to adolescence.

2. What is the difference between Montessori and traditional education?

At the under age six level, Montessori emphasizes learning through all five senses, not just through listening, watching, or reading. Children in Montessori classes learn at their own, individual pace and according to their own choice of activities from hundreds of possibilities. They are not required to sit and listen to a teacher talk to them as a group, but are engaged in individual or group activities of their own, with materials that have been introduced to them 1:1 by the teacher who knows what each child is ready to do. Learning is an exciting process of discovery, leading to concentration, motivation, self-discipline, and a love of learning.

Above age 6 children learn to do independent research, arrange field trips to gather information, interview specialists, create group presentation, dramas, art exhibits, musical productions, science projects, and so forth. There is no limit to what they created in this kind of intelligently guided freedom. There no text books or adult-directed group lessons and daily schedule. There is great respect for the choices of the children, but they easily keep up with or surpass what they would be doing in a more traditional setting. There is no wasted time and children enjoy their work and study. The children ask each other for lessons and much of the learning comes from sharing and inspiring each other instead of competing with each other.

Montessori classes place children in three-year-or-more age groups (3-6, 2.5-6, 6-12, and so on), forming communities in which the older children spontaneously share their knowledge with the younger ones. Montessori represents an entirely different approach to education.

3. What is the main feature of Montessori Method?

The main goal of Montessori is to provide a stimulating, child oriented environment that children can explore, touch and learn without fear. Children learn through their own errors to make the correct decision. The end result of this method is to encourage lifelong learning, the joy of learning and happiness about one's path and purpose in life.

4. How well Montessori trained students excel compared to non-Montessori students?

According to the Research, Montessori students are performing better academically and socially than their non-Montessori peers. These benefits grow as children get more experience and knowledge in a Montessori environment.

5. Is it true that Montessori students are free to do whatever they want and at their own pace?

Yes, it is true that the children are more motivated to learn when working on something of their own and at their own unique pace. A Montessori student may choose the focus of learning on any given day, but the decision is limited by the materials and activities in each area of the curriculum, that the teacher has prepared and presented to the students.

6. If children work at their own pace, don't they fall behind?

No, they don't. The Montessori teacher closely observes each child and provides materials and activities that advance his learning by building on skills and knowledge already gained. This gentle guidance helps each child master the challenge at hand and protects him from moving on before he is ready.

7. Can I do Montessori at home with my child?

Yes, you can use Montessori principles of child development at home. Look at your home through your child's eyes. Children need a sense of belonging, and they get it by participating fully in the routines of everyday life. "Help me do it by myself" is the life theme of the preschooler, school age child, teenager, and young adult.

In school only a trained Montessori teacher can properly implement Montessori education with the specialized learning equipment taught during teacher training, but there are many ideas that can be used in the home with families whose children are in school full-time, or in families where the adults are in charge of the totality of the child's education.

8. Can you find ways for your child to participate in meal preparation, cleaning, gardening, caring for clothes, shoes, and toys?

Providing opportunities for independence is the surest way to build your child's self-esteem and to build the skills needed for life-long learning.

9. Is Montessori good for children with learning disabilities? What about gifted children?

Montessori is designed to help all children reach their fullest potential at their own unique pace. A classroom whose children have varying abilities is a community in which everyone learns from one another and everyone contributes. Moreover, multiage grouping allows each child to find his or her own pace without feeling "ahead" or "behind" in relation to peers.

10. What ages does Montessori serve?

There are more Montessori programs for ages 3-6 than for any other age group, but Montessori is not limited to early childhood. Many infant/toddler programs (ages 2 months to 3 years) exist, as well as elementary (ages 6-12), adolescent (ages 12-15) and even a few Montessori high schools.

11. Are Montessori children successful later in life?

Research studies show that Montessori children are well prepared for later life academically, socially, and emotionally. In addition to scoring well on standardized tests, Montessori children are ranked above average on such criteria as following directions, turning in work on time, listening attentively, using basic skills, showing responsibility, asking provocative questions, showing enthusiasm for learning, and adapting to new situations.

12. I recently observed a Montessori classroom for a day. I was very impressed, but I have three questions.

- 1. There doesn't seem to be any opportunities for pretend play**
- 2. The materials don't seem to allow children to be creative**
- 3. Children don't seem to be interacting with another very much**

A. I can give you three very incomplete answers to your perceptive questions:

- (1)** When Dr. Montessori opened the first Children's House it was full of pretend play things. The children never played with them as long as they were allowed to do real things - i.e. cooking instead of pretending to cook. It is still true.
- (2)** The materials teach specific things and then the creativity is incredible. Like learning how to handle a good violin and then playing music. It is not considered "creative" to use a violin as a hammer, or a bridge while playing with blocks. We consider it "creative" to learn how to use the violin properly and then create music. The same goes for the materials in a Montessori classroom.
- (3)** There is as much interaction as the children desire, but the tasks are so satisfying that, for these few hours a day, children want to master the challenges offered by them. Then they become happier and kinder—true socialization. Also, since concentration is protected above all, as all "work" is respected, children learn early on not to interrupt someone who is concentrating.

13. Who accredits or oversees Montessori schools?

Unfortunately no one body can accredit the Montessori element of schools, but there are state requirements for schools in general. There are several Montessori organizations to which schools can belong. Parents must carefully research, and observe a classroom in operation, in order to choose a real Montessori school for their child.

14. How much does Montessori education cost?

Because Montessori schools are operated independently of one another tuition varies widely. The tuition is usually tied to the salaries of the staff, the size of the school, the state regulations for ration of staff to children, the cost of living, many other factors. The tuition for a Montessori school is determined by costs to run the school, the same as any other private school.

15. Are Montessori schools religious?

Some are, but most are not. Some Montessori schools, just like other schools, operate under the auspices of a church, synagogue, or diocese, but most are independent of any religious affiliation.

16. What does it take to start a Montessori school?

Materials come second. A good starting point is a group of parents who want Montessori for their children. The next step is to look into state and local requirements for schools, such as teacher training, facilities, class size, etc. Selecting a site and making sure it meets applicable building codes is also an early part of the process. Montessori materials and furniture must be purchased, and, unless one of the founders has taken Montessori training, a teacher must be hired.

FAQs ON MONTESSORI TEACHERS

17. What is the advantage of opting Montessori Teachers Training?

The Montessori Teachers Training Course will equip you to impart good quality Montessori method of education to children in Pre-schools, Kindergartens and Day-care centers. This course is helpful to introduce innovative ways in learning and to augment the interests of a child.

18. Does your course have Recognition from the Government?

Yes, Montessori United, Bangalore is a Registered Institution and Certificates are recognized in India and Abroad. Certificates are getting due acceptance in Gulf countries as well.

19. Is any job assistance extended to participants?

We assist qualified and successfully course completed participants to undergo internship of 10 months in our institutions. Job assistance is offered to top ranked students in Schools and Franchisee preschools.

20. What special training do Montessori teachers have?

As with the choice of a Montessori school for children, an adult must also exercise wisdom in choosing a teacher training course. Anyone can legally use the name "Montessori" in describing their teacher training organization. Most institutions are keen to take qualified and trained candidates with minimum 1 year of hands on experience as a Montessori Adult.

Some training centers require a bachelor's degree for admission. There are courses, such as "distance learning" or "correspondence courses" which can help one better understand Montessori theory or which can train adults to work in certain schools.

FAQs ON FACILITIES PROVIDED DURING MONTESSORI TEACHERS TRAINING COURSE

1. Do you provide transportation facilities?

Yes, we can provide transportation facilities from Manarcad and Puthuppally, additional charges payable.

2. Is there any accommodation facilities?

Accommodation will be arranged according to first come first serve basis within our own hostel facilities. Arrangements shall be made in case of need at nearby premises.

3. Is there any provision for lunch?

Lunch will be available at a cost of Rs.80/- (Need to be confirmed at the time of registration)

4. How much is charged for an overnight stay?

Cost of an overnight stay is Rs. 450/- inclusive of Lunch, Breakfast and Dinner.
(Need to be confirmed at the time of registration)

5. When will be the course certification?

On successful completion of the course and assessments, certificates will be issued.

6. Any fee for certification?

No, it is included in the course fee.

SPECIFIC DETAILS OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD AS PRACTICED IN MONTESSORI SCHOOLS

The most valuable elements of training are:

(1) The quality of the teacher-trainers who have undergone rigorous preparation, including the diploma, and 5 more years of teacher training.

(2) The many hours of hands-on practicals or work at the training center practicing with the materials with other adult students, under the guidance of the trainers."

(3) The production of ones own albums. It includes lecture on the pieces of material, the description, many stages of use, purpose, and indirect preparation - hours of practice and discussion, followed by a detailed write-up with hand-drawn illustration of each piece of materials by memory producing one's own personal "teaching albums".

(4) Rigid oral and written exams on the needs of children, and all elements of teaching in a Montessori class, overseen from an "external" examiner.

Protection of the "best" in each child through respect of choice and concentration

The most important discovery that Dr. Montessori has contributed to the field of child development and education is the fostering of the best in each child. She discovered that in an environment where children are allowed to choose their work and to concentrate for as long as needed on that task, that they come out of this period of concentration (or meditation or contemplation) refreshed and full of good will toward others.

The teacher must know how to offer work, to link the child to the environment who is the real teacher, and to protect this process. We know now that this natural goodness and compassion are inborn, and do not need to be taught, but to be protected.

The schedule - The three-hour work period

Under the age of six, there are one or two 3-hour, uninterrupted, work periods each day, not broken up by required group lessons. Older children schedule meetings or study groups with each other the teacher when necessary. Adults and children respect concentration and do not interrupt someone who is busy at a task. Groups form spontaneously or are arranged ahead by special appointment. They almost never take precedence over self-selected work. Note: For more information on the "three-hour work period" see the chapter "My Contribution to Experimental Science" from The Advanced Montessori Method, Volume I, by Dr. Maria Montessori.

Multiage grouping

Children are grouped in mixed ages and abilities in three to six year spans: 0-3, 3-6, 6-12 (sometimes temporarily 6-9 and 9-12), 12-15, 15-18. There is constant interaction, problem solving, child to child teaching, and socialization. Children are challenged according to their ability and never bored.

Work centers

The environment is arranged according to subject area, and children are always free to move around the room instead of staying at desks. There is no limit to how long a child can work with a piece of material. At any one time in a day all subjects -- math, language, science, history, geography, art, music, etc., will be being studied, at all levels.

Teaching method - "Teaching, not by correcting"

There are no papers turned back with red marks and corrections. Instead the child's effort and work is respected as it is. The teacher, through extensive observation and record-keeping, plans individual projects to enable each child to learn what he needs in order to improve.

Teaching Ratio - 1:1 and 1:30+

Except for infant/toddler groups (Ratio dictated by local social service regulations), the teaching ratio is one trained Montessori teacher and one non-teaching aide to 30+ children. Rather than lecturing to large or small groups of children, the teacher is trained to teach one child at a time, and to oversee thirty or more children working on a broad array of tasks. She is facile in the basic lessons of math, language, the arts and sciences, and in guiding a child's research and exploration, capitalizing on his interest in and excitement about a subject. The teacher does not make assignments or dictate what to study or read, nor does she set a limit as to how far a child follows an interest.

Basic lessons

The Montessori teacher spends a lot of time during teacher training practicing the many lessons with materials in all areas. She must pass a written and oral exam on these lessons in order to be certified. She is trained to recognize a child's readiness according to age, ability, and interest in a specific lesson, and is prepared to guide individual progress.

Areas of study

All subjects are interwoven, not taught in isolation, the teacher modeling a "Renaissance" person of broad interests for the children. A child can work on any material he understands at any time.

Class size

Except for infant/toddler groups, the most successful classes are of 30-35 children to one teacher (who is very well trained for the level she is teaching), with one non-teaching assistant. This is possible because the children stay in the same group for three to six years and much of the teaching comes from the children and the environment.

Learning styles

All kinds of intelligences and styles of learning are nurtured: musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, intuitive, and the traditional linguistic and logical-mathematical (reading, writing, and math). This particular model is backed up by Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences.

Assessment

There are no grades, or other forms of reward or punishment, subtle or overt. Assessment is by portfolio and the teacher's observation and record keeping. The test of whether or not the system is working lies in the accomplishment and behavior of the children, their happiness, maturity, kindness, and love of learning and level of work.

Character education

Education of character is considered equally with academic education, children learning to take care of themselves, their environment, each other - cooking, cleaning, building, gardening, moving gracefully, speaking politely, being considerate and helpful, doing social work in the community, etc.

Please note the answers are provided for a general awareness and is subject to change.

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