



## *THE ABC'S OF MONTESSORI AT* **Garden Oaks Elementary**

### **M: is for Multi-sensory exposure and Multiple exposures to concepts**

The same concept is introduced to children in a variety of modalities with increasing complexity as children advance. For example, in the primary Montessori classroom abstract ideas are presented by using concrete, three-dimensional materials. This hands-on experience with a concept helps children begin to have an internal sense of abstract ideas. Repeated experiences and incremental complexity help children fully understand concepts. Since everyone learns in unique ways, this approach also maximizes each child's particular learning styles.

### **O: is for Organizational Skills**

Montessori materials have a common organizational pattern: A place for everything and everything in its place. The lessons are organized into a standard approach to learning tasks. Lessons are often color-coded, shelves ordered to start in the same sequence, may have the same steps, and are organized from left to right. As a result, children learn how to organize their work and organize their thinking for effective problem-solving. Effective organizational skills are a critical component of being successful in any area of endeavor.

### **N: is for Nurturing a child's Natural interest in learning and problem solving.**

A core principal in Montessori is that children have a natural curiosity and desire to "know things". Montessori curriculum cultivates and supports a positive attitude toward learning and effective problem-solving. The Montessori method respects each child's individual strengths and limitations. When a child's social and emotional development is supported they are better able to meet their academic potential. During the three years that the classroom community stays together, children develop a strong sense of community with their peers and learn how to nurture one another as a result. This three year cycle also provides teachers to fully identify students' needs and learning styles as they create effective learning experiences for children.

### **T: is for Time Management**

Children learn how to plan their work. They actively collaborate and negotiate with the teacher about what work to do, how much work to do and how much time to take to complete that work. As children advance, the workload increases and the time span for completion is longer. This process is repeated over and over so children learn how to manage their time more effectively. They are better able to do their work in a prompt and timely manner because they have so much practice planning their time for different kinds of work.

### **E: is for Environment**

Montessori classrooms are designed to be supportive of the learner. Care is taken to ensure that the whole learning environment – rooms, materials and social climate – are prepared in such a way that self-directed learning can take place. Necessary resources are available so children can be active and independent learners. The social environment is safe and positive so that children can focus on learning and trying new things without fear or excessive anxiety. Respect for the classroom environment is required. Materials are handled respectfully. Others are treated with courtesy and respect. This respect in the classroom extends to the larger environment of our school campus, families, Civic Club and neighborhoods, local and global communities.

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### **S: is for Success**

Montessori curriculum is designed for all children to be successful. Children's progress is, through the use of portfolios of student work, authentic assessment, rubrics, teacher observations and other reporting methods as appropriate. Planning for mastery of a concept before advancing to the next, ensures student success. Children are encouraged to explore, and meet the next challenge as they are ready to advance. Students are intellectually challenged, engaged and confident in the Montessori classroom as they experience success!

### **S: is for Sequence**

On easily accessible shelves, materials are arranged in a sequence from simple to complex, from concrete to abstract. The design of materials and learning activities also follows a standard sequence. (left to right and top to bottom). This training in sequencing helps children develop reading, math, and writing skills as well as skills in logic and problem solving. Children learn how to problem solve and think critically by learning how to set up their work in the right sequence.

### **O: is for Order**

Dr. Montessori believed that people want to make sense out of the world – that chaos and confusion are unsettling. The Montessori method is designed to help children find patterns and ways of classifying things in their environment. In short, it is designed to provide order and logic. As children begin to understand the order and sequence of individual lessons, they learn how to make order out of other things and experiences in their environment. They learn how the world works. This leads to more independence and self-reliance. By being in an ordered environment they develop a sense of overall order. This allows them to make better choices because they have learned the general principles of logical thinking.

### **R: is for Real World**

Montessori prepares children for the real world by fostering independence and self-reliance. They learn how to think, speak and write in a thoughtful way. They learn that making mistakes and trying but failing is part of the normal process of learning a skill and becoming competent. They learn how to work both independently and with others in supportive teams or groups. They have learned to respect and value diversity. Children who have experienced a Montessori education tend to be creative and original problem solvers. The Montessori curriculum helps them learn the *process* of effective problem solving, which involves reflective, flexible thinking, a willingness to make mistakes and an openness to divergent ideas.

### **I: is for Integrated curriculum that is Intrinsically Interesting**

The curriculum is carefully structured to demonstrate the connections among different subject areas. Montessori materials are naturally interesting to children because they are designed to appeal to children at each given level of development. Many are self-instructional and self-correcting. Children learn how to integrate, analyze and think critically because the curriculum spirals upward, is interrelated and increasingly challenging!

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