

Garden Oaks Elementary School

*Houston Independent
School District*

*A Place Where
Children Flourish !*

Garden Oaks Elementary is home to a public Montessori program for children grades PK3-6th. Established at Garden Oaks Elementary in 1994, Montessori classes integrate academic, social and emotional skills. This program is primarily funded by the Houston Independent School District and tuition paid by parents, and is further supported by funding raised by volunteer parents in collaboration with the Friends of Montessori (FOM).

This public elementary school Montessori program is designed to give children of all learning and language abilities the opportunity to be educated and socialized in an environment with a methodology and philosophy that reflects the world these children will soon lead. Because we are a public school, we maintain that it be available to all ethnic and socioeconomic levels. It provides each child with a developmentally appropriate, multi-cultural, family-centered education.



**Friends
OF MONTESSORI**

For more information about supporting
Montessori in public schools contact
Tonya Knauth, Garden Oaks Chapter President,
Or visit the website:

www.FOMHouston.org

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Our School

Garden Oaks Elementary is a school rich in heritage, located near the downtown, a convenient drive from 610 North and I-45. Garden Oaks is a diverse neighborhood just north of the Heights. Founded in the 1932, we have been the school of choice for families over the years. Many of our students have gone on to become leaders in the Houston community! With a tradition of excellence in education, Garden Oaks Elementary is a nurturing community of learners where children are encouraged to fulfill their potential in an academically rigorous and engaging environment. Our school is nestled in the heart of the Garden Oaks community, surrounded by beautiful gardens, towering pine trees and majestic oaks. We are also home to a Texas Certified Schoolyard Habitat where students explore the wonders of nature in a unique learning environment.

Garden Oaks students come from within the neighborhood and surrounding areas. While preference is given to students who are zoned to the school, many of our students attend Garden Oaks Elementary on transfer from other parts of the greater Houston area. Our students come from culturally diverse backgrounds ensuring our students a rich educational environment. Our Pre-Kindergarten programs provide a variety of academic settings including both tuition-based and free programs on campus. A limited number of scholarship spaces are available to Montessori PK students.

Instructional Programs to meet your Child's Needs

Garden Oaks Elementary is home to a variety of instructional settings, traditional (English and Spanish) as well as Montessori. If a family is not zoned to the school, a meeting with the principal may be scheduled and application may be made to transfer to the campus.

Montessori

Parents interested in the Montessori program must apply for the program by January of the year preceding enrollment and complete all aspects of the enrollment process including completion of Parent Orientation and student interview. The seeds of this program were first planted in 1993 with a small group of parents and community members interested in supporting the educational process within the public school system. They realized the future of the neighborhood, and the inner city as a whole, lies with quality public schools. The parents organized and partially funded the beginnings of the Montessori program that now boasts eight classrooms and 170+ area students, ages 3-12. As a result of this growth and success, we have a waiting list of applicants each year. Currently, the program serves children not only in the Garden Oaks neighborhood, but from all over the greater Houston area.



Enrollment in HISD

Enrollment in HISD is easy! The following documents are required on the day of enrollment:

- Immunization Records
- Birth Certificate
- Prior School Report Card
- Proof address
- Parent or Guardian ID
- Transfer agreement (if required)

School supplies for the Montessori program are not required however; we ask that a \$50 supply fee be paid upon enrollment to cover the teacher's supply requests for your child.

Public School Requirements

Enrollment in Garden Oaks Elementary whether in the Montessori program or traditional is enrollment in a public school. As such, you agree to adhere by the rules and guidelines of the Houston Independent School District including:

- Maintaining regular attendance in school - absences only when child is ill or in cases of family emergency
- Adherence to the HISD Student Code of Conduct
- Support for the school through participation in school events
- Volunteering to assist at the school for special projects, fundraisers and school functions
- Arriving to school on time and arranging for your child's afterschool care for pick-up
- Keeping all contact information up-to-date
- Sending your child to school in uniform
- Encouraging your child to do their best each and every day!

Friends of Montessori

Friends of Montessori (FOM) was established in 1994 by a group of parents, teachers, and community members dedicated to creating a unique learning alternative within the Houston public school system. A nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization, FOM supports four Houston ISD schools serving more than 800 students annually: Garden Oaks Elementary, Woodrow Wilson Montessori, Whidby Elementary and Los Niños Early Childhood Center. Montessori students benefit from a program developed by Dr. Maria Montessori over 100 years ago! Through many hours of parent volunteer participation, this tried and true method of education is available in Houston public school settings.

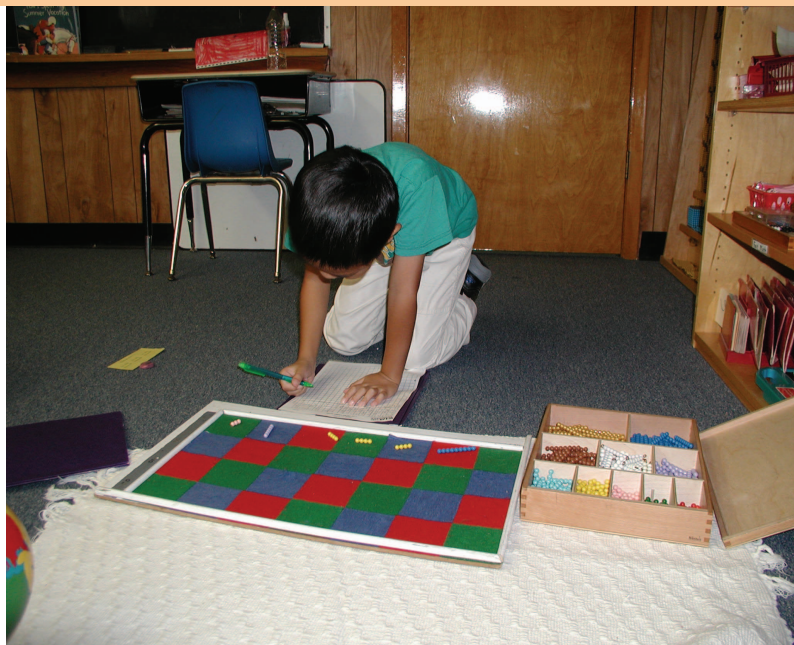
Our public and private sponsors ensure that FOM can continue to support wider access to this proven learning methodology and an outstanding public school option. We all strive to support the development of students with a strong self-image, effective communication skills, creative problem-solving capabilities, and a lifelong enthusiasm for learning. Through awareness, advocacy, funding, and volunteer efforts, the Houston Independent School District, in collaboration with FOM, seeks to achieve that goal for our children and our community. As your child is enrolled in the Montessori Program at Garden Oaks Elementary School, FOM welcomes your whole family! To find out more contact Chapter President Tonya Knauth at tknauth@comcast.net or visit www.fomhouston.org.



Academics

Garden Oaks Elementary is a TEA Recognized school. The following characteristics are vital for children in Montessori programs:

- Children *independently* choose their own work, seek help or locate resources to do the work, often without the teacher, and restore the work so another child will find it ready.
- Students are *competent* and capable of self-correcting work, observing and reflecting on the work of others, and perceive themselves to be successful at managing their work with purpose.
- Children accept “ground rules” of the group in dealings with others.
- Students function socially in a *responsible manner within the authority of a group situation*.
- Children *gain and apply the academic skills* essential to learning and knowing.
- Students are *self-monitoring* and recognize the importance of rules and respect for others.
- Students model *grace and courtesy* and interact with others in a peaceful manner.



Garden Oaks Parent Teacher Organization - Eagle Pals

Garden Oaks Elementary is an active place! We have parent volunteer opportunities campus-wide. In addition to the Friends of Montessori, our school has a Parent Teacher Organization that serves the entire campus. Annual membership is \$5/person which helps to support all students and teachers. Projects and events that are coordinated by the Garden Oaks' Eagle Pals PTA include fundraisers, Friday Fun afterschool treats, student trips to Austin, TX and Washington, D.C., teacher grant program, annual t-shirt design contest, Fall Festival, Student Yearbook, Teacher Talent Show and Dinner, Turkey Day Fun Run, sleepover adventure, campus beautification work days and many other special programs and projects. PTA also coordinates room parents and volunteer recognition. Be sure to join the PTA and support your child's school!

For more information go to the school website and click on the PTA link!



Montessori Admissions

The program is open to all students from age 3 through 6th Grade. The application process for the Garden Oaks Elementary Montessori Program begins in November with Montessori Awareness Week. Applications are due in the school office in January. All students zoned to Garden Oaks Elementary are eligible for consideration with space-available transfers open to others. Parents will be notified of acceptance, and the school requests parental acknowledgment of intent to attend.

What is Montessori?

- **The whole child approach:** the development of social skills, emotional growth, physical coordination and cognition.
- **Prepared environment:** the classroom, materials, social setting and atmosphere support the child.
- **Montessori materials:** Dr. Montessori designed a number of multi-sensory, sequential, and self-correcting materials to facilitate learning.
- **The teacher:** designer of the environment, resource person, role model, demonstrator, record keeper, meticulous observer of children.

Montessori is a program which emphasized rigorous, individualized instruction within a structured classroom setting. The Montessori curriculum is designed to encourage children to move at their own pace yet great care is taken to ensure that all the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills are covered. Students do participate in all district and state assessments including TPRI, Kathy Richardson, Stanford and TAKS.

“The child needs activity concentrated on a task that requires movement of the hands, guided by the intellect.” ---Maria Montessori

Special Opportunities for All Students at Garden Oaks

Impact II Team and Individual competitions in drama, debate, chess and art, Name that Book, Rainbow Math, Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, Science Fair, History Fair and the Kids Hope Mentoring Program, Student Council, Urban Harvest Gardening Program, Writers in the Schools, Safety Patrol, Campus Computer Lab, Renzulli Learning profiles, Science Lab, Literacy Lab

Students also participate in many special performances and competitions in the Houston area. School traditions or “markers” include:
3rd grade trip to the SanJacinto Monument
4th grade trip to Austin, TX
5th grade trip to Washington, D.C.
6th grades may choose to participate in international travel in conjunction with exchange opportunities with the Houston-area Montessori collaborative

Afterschool Activities

YMCA After-School Program which includes Spanish and Theater Under the Stars

Soccer

Chess Club

Robotics

Marathon Kids

Spanish Classes

And many other exciting opportunities!