The Montessori Curriculum

• Is based on Dr. Montessori’s philosophy of Peace
• Is known as The Cosmic Curriculum.
• The subject areas are woven together.
• The children make connections between the subject area spontaneously.
Characteristics of The Montessori Prepared Environment

- Each environment is comprised of three age groups:
  - 18 months – 2.5 years
  - 2.5 – 6 years
    - 6 – 9 years
    - 9 – 12 years
    - 12 – 15 years
    - 15 – 18 years
Characteristics of The Montessori Prepared Environment

• **Freedom** to choose activities according to the child’s inner needs.
• **Freedom** to explore with the learning materials.
• **Freedom** to communicate.
• **Freedom** to achieve individual potential.
Independence

• “Teach me to do things by myself.”

  Maria Montessori –Education and Peace

• The child resists letting us adults help if we try to substitute our own activities for the child’s.
Two Gifts of Nature

• The young child from birth to six years enjoys 2 great natural gifts:

• The Absorbent Mind
• The Sensitive Periods, also known as times of optimal learning.
Two Gifts of Nature

• “The sensitive periods drive the child to seek certain experiences and activities and the absorbent mind soaks in all the information received effortlessly.”

Clare Healy Walls, At the Heart of Montessori
The Absorbent Mind

• “Impressions do not merely enter his mind – they form it.”

Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind.
The Sensitive Periods

- Transitory times when a child is interested in one aspect of an environment, often to the exclusion of others.
- Example: climbing stairs
  learning to walk
  learning to speak
Language Development

• Consider the wonder of language acquisition.
• The Montessori curriculum introduces the children to the phonetic sounds of letters.
• Spontaneous reading and grammar activities follow.
Characteristics of The Montessori Prepared Environment

- Reverence for **Nature**.
- A love of **Silence**
- Spontaneous **self-discipline**.
The Montessori Director/ess

- Experiences a preparation period of Formation
- Trained to be an Observer.
- Is connected with spiritual self.
- Believes that “children unaided can construct an orderly society.”
Our Work

• “Our work as adults does not consist in teaching, but in helping the infant mind in its work of development.”

Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind
The Montessori Materials

- Provide learning through the senses.
- "the senses, being explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge."

Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind
The Hand

• “No sensorial education can ever occur except as a part of some total activity in which both intelligence and movement are involved.”

• “The Hand is the instrument of the mind.”

  • Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*. 
The Montessori Materials

• Each piece of material contains a Control of Error, i.e. a self-correcting possibility.

• This unique element allows the children to self-correct and leads to independence.
Critical Thinking

• Critical thinking is encouraged through the Control of Error, and

• Through the relationship between the children and the teacher.
Relationship with the Teacher

• When children have a secure relationship with their teachers, they are more comfortable taking risks that enhance learning—tackling challenging tasks.
• They persist when they run into difficulty.
• They ask questions when they are confused.
  • Jean M. Clinton B.Mus MD(FRCPC) McMaster University
Education

• “Our work as adults does not consist in teaching but in helping the infant mind in its work of development.”

Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind
Social Development

• “It is interesting to see how little by little, these (children) become aware of forming a community which behaves as such… Once they have reached this level, the children no longer act thoughtlessly, but put the group first and try to succeed for its benefit.”

Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind
Peace

• Many activities in the Montessori environment contribute towards resolution of conflict.

• For Example: The Peace Table
Active Peace

I offer you peace
I offer you love
I offer you friendship
I hear your cry
I see your beauty
I feel your pain
My wisdom flows from my spirit within
I salute that spirit in you
Let us work together for peace.

Taught by one of Gandhi’s nephews.
References

- Healy Walls, Clare, *At the Heart of Montessori: The Infant Toddler (0 – 3 Years)*, 2008, Cahills, Dublin, Ireland.
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