The History of Montessori Education

Montessori pedagogy was first conceived by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1897. Dr. Maria Montessori was the first ever female physician in Italy. She researched and developed her pedagogy while working at the Clinica Psychiatrica in Rome, Italy, with children with special needs. She then applied her pedagogy to ‘typical’ children from very low income families in the San Lorenzo slums of Rome when she founded Casa de Bambini in 1907.

Dr. Montessori began training other teachers and her teaching methods spread throughout the world. The first Montessori school was founded in North America in 1912.

She continued to learn and expand the Montessori Method to include our Cosmic Education – history, geography, botany, zoology, peace, social justice – throughout her life. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times and spoke at numerous international conferences on education and peace.

The mission of California Montessori Project is to offer a quality, tuition-free Montessori Education that challenges our students to reach their full potential.

CMP at a glance
- 7 Campuses
- Approx. 2600 Students
- 22:1 Student-Teacher Ratio
- AMS & WASC Accredited

WHAT IS MONTESSORI EDUCATION?

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What is Montessori?

The Basic Tenets of Montessori Education

Children develop because of inner forces of nature.
- “biological destiny”
- Children observed as individuals.
- Individual learning preferences.

Follow the Child.
- Child observed and learning preferences noted.
- Lessons presented based on observation.
- Progress measured based on observation.

Children must be free to construct their own learning.
- Freedom is achieved through mastery of self and environment.
- Children demonstrate the ability to concentrate on chosen work and not hindering concentration of peers.

Children move through certain planes of development and sensitive periods.
- 0-6 children absorb environment, first without volition, then by manipulating it with their hands.
- 6-12 social and intellectual development, as members of a community.
- 12-18 great transformation physically and psychically, developing moral concepts, sense of justice, and sense of self and individual.

A prepared environment is essential for the learning experience of children.
- Classroom layout from child’s point of view: child-sized; low shelves and windows; concrete to abstract, simple to complex.
- Strong aesthetic component: beauty, order, nature, natural lighting.
- Materials are self-correcting, designed to lead to concentration, teach specific concept, represent multiple layers of complexity.
- Culture of work, cooperation, grace and courtesy, mastery of skill, Peace.
- Dynamic environment with a variety of work areas for diverse learners.
- Peace Education: study of concepts and heroes of peace and social justice, conflict resolution, skills for self-regulation.
- Adults in classroom also learn to prepare themselves to be part of the prepared environment: teacher reflection, family education.

The teacher is not the distributor of knowledge, but an observer and a guide to learning.
- Reflection on personal motivations, strengths and challenges.
- Life-long learner.
- Act as link between child and materials.
- “The guardian angel of minds concentrated on work that will improve them.” (M. Montessori)

Children go through a process of normalization as they grow.
- Equilibrium of normal development.
- Having developed the skills of concentration and self-regulation, children can work in harmony with peers and environment.

Multi-age classroom.
- Children work at their own pace.
- Experts and novices always present.
- Children develop a sense of community and establish strong relationships when looping together.
- Peer teaching and collaborative learning.

Montessori methods are used from infant to elderly environments all over the world.