

## **Montessori Principles Parents Should Know**

Don't just limit the education to the classroom. You can bring Montessori principles into your life! Here are several principles for parents with children in Montessori schools to keep in mind:

### **Freedom With Limits**

The main thing about Montessori is freedom. Freedom to explore. Freedom to gain independence. But many people misconstrue the meaning of freedom with "letting the child do whatever, whenever they want."

No, it's not that. In order for kids to want to explore the world, they must feel free and respected. But you must also provide safe opportunities. Similar to teachers in Montessori schools, you must be a role model and create limits within a safe environment. Once your child learns respect for their surroundings, belongings, and how to control their impulses, their environment can expand.

Younger children need more limits imposed, such as safety items to prevent injury. The other principles of Montessori also express methods for providing freedom with limits.

### **Prepared Environment**

One of the defining aspects of Montessori principles in the classroom and at home is the idea of a "prepared environment." Within such an environment, children learn how to care for the space provided to them. The space is organized effectively, so that the children can explore at their own pace, guided only by their curiosity.

Prepared environments allow for independence and freedom within limits, as previously discussed. A Montessori classroom is all about encouraging students to be active in their own education.

You can prepare an environment by organizing a space in such a way that children have options to play and explore. For instance, a playroom would have open shelves with organized toys and books that your child can pick and choose from.

### **Observation**

The Montessori method was created by observing children at play. Just as Montessori instructors observe children to see how they are developing, you, as a parent, can discover much about your child. Through simple observation you will notice their special interests, what skills they are trying to learn, and more.

If you want to use observation more effectively, get on your kid's level and see the world from their perspective. You may discover answers to questions like why your child keeps trying to climb a chair or why they are so interested in a specific object.

### **Realistic World**

Children are often living in a fantasy world, even though their minds are not yet capable of abstract thinking. Montessori recommends introducing fantasy later, after children have gained education based on reality. While avoiding all fantasy is difficult, classrooms and households using the Montessori method can focus on modeling everyday life—cooking, cleaning, reading about the natural world, and playing outside.

### **Peace Education**

A key principle reflected in Montessori schools throughout the world is peace. Community, both local and global, is taught. Additionally, a Montessori education focuses on the real world, stress management, and how to go about peaceful conflict resolution. This kind of education involves talking about social injustice, discussing positive and negative emotions, tolerance, empathy, and respect.

### **Less is More**

Many parents want to dote on their kids, and that is understandable. Montessori teaches us that such consumption is unnecessary. The fewer toys a child has, the more they can figure out their world and find order. Conversely, too many toys can be overwhelming. A child will struggle to make a choice, and that could lead to less time spent exploring the world.

Also, too many choices reduce the value of each item. When children do not

respect their toys, they will break them or say that they are bored and demand even more. So, keep the number of kid's toys to a minimum and rotate them out.

### **Refine the Natural Senses**

From the minute a child takes their first breath, they are utilizing every one of their senses. Some of those senses are stronger than others and will get stronger over time. However, a child between the age of 0-6 years is far more attuned to touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing than adults.

Babies, for example, know their parents by their scent alone. In order to explore the world, they put things in their mouth.

That is why Montessori principles emphasize the necessity of natural items. Wood, fabric, and other natural materials are preferred over plastic, which has no flavor or texture. Montessori classrooms provide items with a broad range of weights, sizes, colors, and textures to refine the senses.

### **Work Periods**

Authentic Montessori schools will set their classroom lessons around uninterrupted work periods. Depending on the children's age, the work period is often between 2-3 hours long. Instead of breaking up periods into shorter clips, children have longer work periods so that they can concentrate on a single subject. This way, the children may focus on what they are learning and enjoy it more completely. During these periods, kids can also work at their own pace.

### **Sensitive Periods**

Throughout a child's development, there are times when the individual's ability to gather and retain information or mastering a skill increases dramatically. As a parent, you may observe your children becoming more interested in language. They start replicating your speech patterns in order to develop their own voice. By learning how to recognize these sensitive periods, you can assist in your child's growth at home.

In a Montessori school, teachers know how to identify sensitive periods within their students and will provide resources needed to accelerate learning.

### **Conclusion**

Montessori schools put these principles into action every single day. You can do the same at home, too.