

Montessori-Based Curriculum

We at St. Joseph Montessori-Based Preschool practice principles set forth by Maria Montessori. "The education of even a small child, therefore, does not aim at preparing him for school, but for life." (Maria Montessori)

The history of Montessori education goes back to the turn of the Twentieth Century. Dr. Maria Montessori,

Italy's first woman doctor, began her work with children in 1899, when she was asked by the Italian government to direct a state school for retarded children. After close observation and isolation of the children's learning difficulties, Dr. Montessori developed a simple teaching approach to help these children. The success of Dr. Montessori's approach was revealed when these children shocked authorities by passing state examinations given to normal children of the same age.

The theory behind Montessori education is simple. Children want to learn. From birth to three, the child lives in what appears to be a chaotic world. He or she gradually establishes order by learning to distinguish the senses.

From three to six, the child passes through sensitive periods, awakening as an individual and revealing surprising mental agility and an intense, almost passionate interest in the world. The child loves to learn new words and is interested in orderliness and good manners – not as a game, but as a representation of the adult world toward which he or she is moving. These sensitive periods come from an inner need to acquire and master skills that are especially necessary. If not allowed to follow this natural curiosity and need to know, the child can lose interest in exploring and discovering his or her environment.

The aim is to enable the child to function in the environment independently. The underlying principle is one of freedom within established limits, which permits the child to gain self-esteem and self-reliance.

The Preschool is a community in which children live and work cooperatively. "The Prepared Environment," from scaled furniture and cleaning utensils to special Montessori apparatus, is essential to a Montessori education.

The special environment offers a means (time, place and circumstance) by which the children can develop to their potential according to their individual needs, based upon Dr. Montessori's observations and recommendations for all children.

The Montessori apparatus is designed scientifically to provide opportunities for the child to explore concrete examples of abstract ideas. It is self-correcting, allowing the children to develop their senses and discover concepts under the guidance of a skilled Montessori teacher.

With close guidance from our teachers, a child attending our school will be exposed to this method which promotes the development of the whole child, facilitates the growth of inner discipline and cultivates the child's own natural joy in learning.

Learn more about the Montessori philosophy and St. Joseph Preschool by reading our Preschool Handbook.