



Montessori Children's House The Montessori Method [page 1]

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The basic idea in the Montessori philosophy of education is that every child carries unseen within her the person she will become. In order to develop her physical, intellectual and spiritual powers to the fullest, she must have freedom. A freedom to be achieved through order and self-discipline. The world of the child, say Montessori educators, is full of sights and sounds which at first appear chaotic. From this chaos the child must gradually create order, and learn to distinguish among the impressions that assail her senses, slowly but surely gain mastery of herself and her environment.

Dr. Montessori developed what she called the “prepared environment” which already possesses a certain order and disposes the child at her own speed, according to her own capacities and in a non-competitive atmosphere.

“Never let a child risk failure, until she has a reasonable chance of success.”

This is what Dr. Montessori said understanding the necessity for the acquisition of a basic skill before its use in a competitive learning situation. The years between three and six are the years that a child most easily learns the rules of human behavior. These years can be constructively devoted to “civilizing” the child, freeing her through the acquisition of good manners and habits, to take her place in her culture.

The child who has had the benefit of a Montessori environment is freer at a later age to devote herself more exclusively to the development of her intellectual faculties. The method by which children are taught in the Montessori school might well be called “structured learning.” Since the child has learned to work by herself, in the prepared environment, enjoying the presence of other children, but not working necessarily directly with them, the Montessori teacher is able to observe a child individually. The structure of Montessori learning involves the use of many materials with which the child may work individually. At every step of her learning, the teaching material is designed to test her understanding and to correct her errors.





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Dr. Montessori has recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. Children move themselves toward learning. The teacher prepares the environment, directs the activity, functions as the authority, offers the child stimulations, but it is the child who learns, who is motivated through work itself (not solely by the teacher's personality) to persist in a given task.

If the Montessori child is free to learn, it is because she has acquired from her exposure to both physical and mental order, an “inner discipline.” This is the core of Dr. Montessori's philosophy.

Social adjustment, though it is a necessary condition for learning in a school room, it is not the purpose of education. Patterns of concentration, stick-to-itiveness, and thoroughness, established in early childhood, produce a confident, competent learner in later years. Schools have existed historically to teach children to observe, to think, to judge. **Montessori introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social disciplines go hand in hand.**

