

Some Comparisons of Montessori Education with Traditional Education

Source: American Montessori Society

Montessori children are usually adaptable. They have learned to work independently and in groups. Since they've been encouraged to make decisions from an early age, these children are problem-solvers who can make choices and manage their time well.

They have also been encouraged to exchange ideas and discuss their work freely with others, and good communication skills ease the way in new settings.

Research has shown that the best predictor of future success is a sense of self-esteem. Montessori programs, based on self-directed, non-competitive activities, help children develop good self-images and the confidence to face challenges and change with optimism.

Montessori	Traditional
Emphasis on: cognitive and social development	Emphasis on: social development
Teacher has unobtrusive role in classroom	Teacher is center of classroom as "controller"
Environment and method encourage self-discipline	Teacher acts as primary enforcer of discipline
Mainly individual instruction	Group and individual instruction
Mixed age grouping	Same age grouping
Grouping encourages children to teach and help each other	Most teaching done by teacher
Child chooses own work	Curriculum structured for child
Child discovers own concepts from self-teaching	Child is guided to concepts by teacher
Child works as long as he wishes on chosen project	Child generally allotted specific time for work
Child sets own learning pace	Instruction pace usually set by group norm
Child spots own errors from feedback of material	If work is corrected, errors usually pointed out by teacher
Child reinforces own learning by repetition of work and internal feelings of success	Learning is reinforced externally by repetition and rewards
Multi-sensory materials for physical exploration	Fewer materials for sensory development
Organized program for learning care of self and environment (polishing shoes, cleaning the sink, etc.)	Less emphasis on self-care instruction
Child can work where he chooses, move around and talk at will (yet not disturb work of others); group work is voluntary	Child usually assigned own chair: encouraged to participate, sit still and listen during group sessions
Organized program for parents to understand the Montessori philosophy and participate in the learning process	Voluntary parent involvement