

Rose Hill Montessori School

PRIMARY CURRICULUM

Pre-school and Kindergarten (ages 3 - 6)

The Montessori approach is based on an integral interaction between the child, environment, and teacher.

The child's purpose is to develop to the best of his potential. A child learns from interacting with and within his environment. When his environment meets his needs for development, he becomes a mentally healthy, independent human being.

The teacher - or "Directress" - is the guide that helps link the child with the environment. The teacher must be adequately prepared to model appropriate behavior, assess readiness for a lesson, demonstrate the activities, observe progress, guide exploration, and determine the direction in which the child needs to go. She must also continually adapt the environment to the child's needs.

The Montessori classroom is a "Prepared Environment." Children learn more directly from it than from the teacher so it must aid every area of their development. The Primary classroom contains activities and material that meet the needs of the 3 to 6 year old children. The material are grouped into 5 main areas:

I. Sensorial

The Sensorial material help the child develop all of his senses. He will learn to discriminate objects based on color, size, shape, length, taste, sound, texture, etc.

Besides enabling a child to internalize these concepts, the material also provide a base for the development of other skills, such as music, math, and language. The manipulation and layout of the material helps develop left to right sequencing needed in language and finger control needed in writing.

II. Practical life

The Practical Life activities help develop independent living skills. A child will learn to hang up her coat, open her own lunch box, fold her own blanket, put away her own mat, sweep or sponge up her own spills, and to pour her own juice or milk.

The Practical Life activities also develop fine motor and gross motor coordination. The child will learn to pour grains and then water from large and small pitchers with no spillage. He will carry large, heavy objects as well as tiny, delicate objects without dropping or breaking them. He will use large objects such as ladles, and small objects such as tweezers to transfer objects from one place to another. All of these exercises help him to move his body and hands with grace and self-control.

They also develop a sense of sequencing. To succeed, the activities need to be done in a certain order. This helps to develop the sense of order and sequence within language and math.

The activities also help a child to focus and concentrate because of the concentrated effort needed to move her body properly and delicately to avoid spilling, etc. within the activities.

The Practical Life area also includes exercises in Grace and Courtesy: saying please, thank you, excuse me; offering and accepting politely; waiting patiently to take turns.

III. Language

The child first works with various Pre-language activities. He learns certain terminology: "on, under, under, behind, first, last, etc." He practices exercises that increase

the auditory memory span. He does matching, categorizing, sequencing, rhyming. He learns the letter sounds, names, and sequence in the alphabet

Pre-writing may include cutting, pasting, tracing and drawing lines with the metal insets, tracing geometric shapes, and tracing sandpaper or Braille letters.

Eventually the child learns to spell words with the moveable alphabet and then moves on to reading words, phrases, sentences, and eventually books (when ready!)

The Montessori language program is phonetically based and it does meet the needs of both left and right brain learners.

IV. **Math**

Math explores the properties and manipulation of numbers. The material illustrates the dynamics of our base 10 number system and teaches the child to carry out the various mathematical operations.

Math is demonstrated to the child by first introducing quantity, then the symbol, and then their association.

Mathematical concepts are also worked with: spatial relationships, patterning, counting, time, calendar, etc.

V. **Cultural Subjects**

The activities that fall into this category provide a fun and easy way to learn geography, science and art. The child matches and grades the bells to train her hearing of music. She manipulates puzzles and matching cards to learn the continents, planets, plant parts, and animal parts. She colors special drawings to identify parts of a flower or bird. She learns that the earth is made of land, water, and air. She learns to recognize the animals and life forms that live within those elements. She also observes living creatures, such as a hermit crab or turtle, brought into the environment. All of these enhance the awareness of the world around her.

VI. **Foreign Language**

The primary students receive 2 half-hour sessions each week studying Spanish. Through songs and movement they learn the words for the colors, numbers, foods, simple common expressions, and other basic vocabulary.

The classroom environment is kept orderly - everything in its place. This gives the child the security that he can find an activity when he wants it.

The quantity of each piece of material is limited. The child must learn to wait, thus developing patience. This also encourages exploration of other activities.

The child is encouraged to repeat her "work." Dr. Montessori believed that the hand is a direct link to the brain. In the repetitive manipulation of a piece of material, the child deepens her understanding of a concept.

To enhance a child's development of independence, the classroom offers him "freedom within limits." He must follow the ground rules of respect - for himself, others, and his environment, but he has the freedom to choose his own work, to work at a place of his choice, and to complete it at his own pace.

Within the Montessori Prepared Environment the child has many opportunities to successfully and joyfully build her mind and body.