“I love the fact that teachers ‘follow the child.’ Students are presented lessons on their level, and they are able to work at their own pace without any pressure. Our students seem to grasp concepts much better when they are comfortable in their prepared environment.”

— a Washington Montessori teacher
Montessori philosophy provides for an individualized education that fosters the development of a child’s independence and self-responsibility. It allows for a child’s freedom to pursue their individual interests and receive direct instruction in the Common Core State Standards. Maria Montessori believed in the “natural unfolding of the child’s intelligence” and that the teacher’s role is to guide the child along their path.

**THE MONTESSORI CLASSROOM**

The Montessori classroom is carefully prepared. The environment is designed to be child-friendly. Tables, chairs and other aspects of the classroom are child-sized, one way in which a child’s independence and sense of responsibility is fostered. Classroom materials are attractively arranged in boxes or trays and are placed on shelves that are easily accessible to the child. Montessori materials are designed to address specific skills that are appropriate to the developmental needs of the child. These same materials may follow the child on their academic path as they move from early childhood to the upper grades.

Montessori philosophy provides for multi-age classrooms. At Washington Montessori School we offer a Pre K/K classroom for 4- and 5-year-olds. First, second and third grades are offered in various combinations while fourth and fifth are stand-alone classrooms that follow Montessori philosophy.

**CURRICULUM AREAS**

Montessori classrooms have very specific curriculum areas. Within each of these areas are specific materials that are logically organized by difficulty or in a specific learning sequence. Each work is designed to be engaging to the child and provides purpose, process and closure, all with the goal of allowing the child to be successful in their work.

**Practical Life:** Enhances the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of the environment, lessons in grace and courtesy and coordination of physical movement. This work often looks like a smaller version of what children see adults doing, such as sweeping, pouring, spooning and mopping.

**Sensorial:** Enables the child to order, classify and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color and pitch.

**Mathematics:** Makes use of manipulative materials to enable the child to internalize concepts of number symbol, sequence, operations and memorization of basic math facts. These materials are designed to move the child along a continuum of understanding from the concrete to the abstract.

**Language:** Includes oral language development, written expression, reading, the study of grammar, creative dramatics and children’s literature. The Montessori reading program is phonics-based and makes use of sand paper letters and letter cutouts to aid in a child’s early language development.

**Cultural Areas:** Children are exposed to geography, history and life sciences. Music, art and movement are also part of the integrated cultural curriculum. Cultural lessons are focused on enhancing a child’s understanding of the world around them.

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