**The**[**10 Educational Principles**](https://montessoriacademy.com.au/montessori-education/principles-of-montessori-education/) **as established by Dr. Maria Montessori are:**

1. Respect for the child
2. Absorbent minds
3. Sensitive periods
4. Educating the whole child
5. Individualized learning
6. Freedom of movement and choice
7. Prepared environment
8. Intrinsic motivation
9. Independence
10. Auto-education: It's based on the belief that children are capable and willing to teach themselves if they are provided with interesting learning stimulus. Montessori materials were developed to meet this need and empower children with the ability to direct their own education.

The Montessori method of education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori through an iterative process of experimentation and [observation](https://theglobalmontessorinetwork.org/resource/parents/observation-english/). The principles of her method are based on the idea that children can learn through self-directed exploration.

The Montessori method emphasizes the importance of a child’s [social and emotional development](https://theglobalmontessorinetwork.org/resource/parents/session-12-english/), independence, creativity, and freedom within an educational environment. Let us learn about 12 select principles of Montessori education.

**Principle #1: Respect for the Child**

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that every child is unique. Some children work best with more freedom, some need to be told what to do, and some may not respond well to any form of control. Therefore, Montessori schools are rooted in a deep respect for the uniqueness of every child. Children have the freedom to choose, make mistakes, and learn at their own pace.

**Principle #2: Children have an “Absorbent Mind”**

Through years of observation and research, Dr. Maria Montessori determined that early age development (0 to 6 years) is crucial as a child learns by observation. She termed this stage of development as the “[absorbent mind](https://theglobalmontessorinetwork.org/absorbent-minds-with-joanne-shango/)” because during this stage a child has a sponge-like capacity to absorb information from their environment.

“At some given moment, it happens that the child becomes deeply interested in a piece of work; we see it in the expression on his face, his intense concentration, the devotion to the exercise.” — Dr. Maria Montessori in *The Discovery of the Child*.

Children can use their own judgment and work in a self-directed manner, which is what allows them to grow into independent thinkers. Thus, it is important to develop a sense of their culture and lay the foundations of their learning, intelligence, and personality.

**Principle #3: Sensitive Periods**

Montessori pedagogy believes there are certain periods during which children are more ready to learn certain skills. These are known as sensitive periods, and last only as long as is necessary for the child to acquire the skills. [Sensitive periods](https://theglobalmontessorinetwork.org/resource/parents/sensitive-periods-english/) are characterized by intensity, repetition, and commitment.

The order in which sensitive periods occur (i.e., a sensitive period for writing) as well as the timing of the period varies for each child.

Through observation, Montessori teachers must identify sensitive periods in their students and provide the resources for children to flourish during this time. Sensitive Periods Are Critical for Learning.

Despite what you may think, sensitive periods do not refer to phases that emotional/hormonal teens might go through, but rather essential milestones in the learning process for children. Most of these sensitive periods involve a child’s interests being concentrated on developing a specific skill or piece of knowledge. This is the primary reason why the first 6 years are so crucial: the most important learning milestones occur during those early years.

According to Montessori theory, there are five categories of milestones that children experience during these 6 years: order, language, sensory skills, movement, and social skills, respectively. How long these periods last really depends on the child and how long they choose to spend developing that area. Sensitive periods are often characterized by mimicking, intense concentration, or repetitive or compulsive behavior.

The **Order stage** refers to the time from birth up to age five. This is when the child will start to develop reasoning skills, organizational skills, and the ability to understand their environment. This stage can often be characterized by your child acting repetitively and expressing cravings for consistency, routine, and structure. Children might enjoy putting things away or in order as much if not more than playing with their toys during this stage.

The **Language stage** refers to the child’s developing sensitivity for spoken language, written language, and reading. The sensitivity period for spoken language can start around 7 months and last until 3 years of age. This is when they begin to mimic sounds and mouth movements and develop the ability to communicate verbally.

The sensitivity period for writing usually takes place around age 3 1/2 to age 4 1/2 while the reading sensitivity period starts at 4 1/2 and goes on until 5 1/2. Cultivate an environment that is rich in language to best help your child develop this skill. You can do that by speaking clearly to them and with others, singing to them, and reading to them.

The **Sensory Skills stage** takes place beginning at birth and continuing to age 5. This is when the child really begins to understand and refine their senses. This period can be characterized by a child’s fascination primarily with touch, taste, sight, and smell. The first sensory stage begins at age one and is characterized by the child’s fascination with tiny things and tiny details. It concludes when the child begins to grasp the connection between order and detail. The second stage begins at age 2 and is characterized by the child’s interest and desire to take part in learning experiences that integrate the senses. You can help encourage sensory development by providing activities for your child that will allow them to explore different textures and sights.

The **Movement stage** can be divided into two stages. These stages begin at birth and then at age 2. The first stage is when the child begins to crawl, pull up, and eventually walk on their own. They also begin to develop their muscles and hand-eye coordination. The second stage begins at age 2 when the child begins to strengthen their grip and hold things with both hands. Playing outside and at the park are great ways to encourage the development of this skill.

Finally, is the **Social Skills stage** that begins at age 2. This is the period in which the child begins to learn that they are part of a group. During this period, the child will most likely direct their skills and interests towards groups of people. Cultivating friendships will become more important as well as participating in cooperative play. Teaching your child simple etiquette like saying please and thank you and providing them with ample opportunities to socialize and get to know children their age is a great way to ensure that they develop healthy social skills.

**Principle #4: Educating the Whole Child**

‘Educating the Whole Child‘ refers to the process of educating all the child’s senses in order to build awareness and understanding.

The Montessori method of education therefore focuses on nurturing each child’s potential by providing a developmentally appropriate learning environment that supports their intellectual, physical, emotional, and social growth.

The school environment is designed with children in mind, so it has many different stimuli for them to learn from. The Montessori curriculum covers all aspects of development, such as practical life, sensorial, cultural, language, mathematics, geography, and science.

**Principle #5: Focus on Individualized Learning**

Montessori education places an emphasis on the idea that [children are capable of handling their own learning](https://theglobalmontessorinetwork.org/8-ways-in-which-montessori-education-can-help-your-child-succeed/). Therefore, the Montessori school places children with peers of varying ages, abilities, development needs, and levels of achievement in a common classroom.

“The fundamental help in development, especially with little children of 3 years of age, is not to interfere. Interference stops the activity and stops concentration.” — Dr. Maria Montessori in *The Child, Society, and the World: Unpublished Speeches and Writings*.

Children are encouraged to carry out activities based on their individual developmental needs, while educators keep track of their progress based on observation. Thus, making learning active, individualized, self-correcting, and tailored to the needs and interests of each individual child.

**Principle #6: Freedom of Movement and Choice**

The Montessori method of education is based on the belief that children are capable of self-learning and should be given the opportunity to develop their intellectual, physical, social, and emotional capacities through self-directed exploration.

In Montessori learning environments, children are free to move around at will and choose from a variety of activities, while educators act as facilitators in the background, providing guidance when necessary. The curriculum is planned and is prepared so that children can learn best and discover learning outcomes through hands-on experience.

**Principle #7: Prepared Environment**

Maria Montessori observed that children learn better in an environment that is organized to support their learning and interests. This was termed a prepared environment.

“Children acquire knowledge through experience in the environment.” — Dr. Maria Montessori in *The 1946 London Lectures.*

In a [prepared environment](https://theglobalmontessorinetwork.org/resource/parents/prepared-environment-english/), children are free to follow their interests, choose their work, and progress at their own pace within this space.

**Principle #8: Promotes Intrinsic Motivation**

The Montessori classroom is prepared in such a way that promotes intrinsic motivation and self-regulation. Children are given the freedom to progress at their own pace, which creates a sense of autonomy by providing them with the opportunity to follow their interests.

Intrinsic motivation is the desire to learn within each child and themselves. It is an individual and individualistic type of motivation.

There are no gold stars or extrinsic rewards for children’s learning in a Montessori classroom. Completing an activity and learning how to do it themselves gives children a sense of accomplishment, an intrinsic reward.

**Principle #9: Child Independence**

The Montessori classroom promotes independence through a hands-on approach. Children are encouraged to work individually and in groups. It allows them to develop self-regulation and leadership skills.

“The child’s development follows a path of successive stages of independence, and our knowledge of this must guide us in our behavior towards him. We must help the child to act, will, and think for himself. This is the art of serving the spirit, an art which can be practiced to perfection only when working among children.” – Dr. Maria Montessori in The Absorbent Mind.

Montessori classrooms are designed intending to carry out the three guiding principles of development: sensorial, intellectual, and moral development. It helps children to see, hear and touch everything of their interest in the room. The three-tier system of essential equipment (i.e., all materials necessary for a particular stage of learning) allows Montessori classrooms to be self-contained and prepared for any type of opportunity, while also using less space.

The Montessori curriculum is based on the idea that children are born with a natural curiosity and a love for learning. Each child’s interests should be respected and encouraged to explore independently.

**Principle #10: Auto-Education**

In the Montessori Method, auto-education is one of the foundational principles.

“A child who has become master of his acts through long and repeated exercises, and who has been encouraged by the pleasant and interesting activities in which he has been engaged, is a child filled with health and joy and remarkable for his calmness and discipline.” — Dr. Maria Montessori in *The Discovery of the Child*

This approach is based on the belief that children are capable and willing to learn if given the right learning opportunities and experiences. To meet the development needs of the children so that they can learn by exploration, Montessori classrooms, and materials were also developed. Montessori educators observe a child’s progress and provide them with a prepared environment, guidance, and encouragement to auto-educate themselves.

**Principle #11: Work Periods**

A work period is a time during which children are engaged in some form of activity. During their classroom lessons, Montessori schools emphasize uninterrupted work periods so that they can concentrate on a single subject. They do not have a set number of work periods each day, but have a set length for each work period. Depending on the age and learning ability of the child, the work period can last from 20 minutes to 3 hours. As a result, the children can concentrate on what they are learning and enjoy it more.

**Principle #12: Role of Montessori Guides**

Montessori teachers are known as Guides, Directress’ or, more generally, as educators. Guides encourage Children to take responsibility for their own learning by providing an environment where they can explore, test, experiment, and make mistakes. Their role is to observe and guide children through self-directed, self-paced, and self-guided activities.