

## Comparisons of Montessori Education with Traditional Education

Montessori children are unusually 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 appropriate choices and manage their time well.

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

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

<i>Montessori</i>	<i>Traditional</i>
Emphasis on: a cognitive structures and social development.	Emphasis on: rote knowledge and social development.
Teacher has unobtrusive role in classroom activity; child is an active participant in learning.	Teacher has dominant, active role in classroom activity; child is a passive participant in learning.
Environment and method encourage internal self-discipline.	Teacher acts as primary enforcer of external discipline.
Instruction, both individual and group, adapts to each student's learning style.	Instruction, both individual and group, conforms to the adult's teaching style.
Mixed age grouping.	Same age grouping.
Children are encouraged to teach, collaborate, and help each other.	Most teaching is done by teacher and collaboration is discouraged.
Child chooses own work from interests and abilities.	Curriculum structured for child with little regard for child's interests.
Child formulates own concepts from self-teaching materials.	Child is guided to concepts by teacher.
Child works as long as s/he wishes on chosen project.	Child generally given specific time limit for work.
Child sets own learning pace to internalize information.	Instruction pace usually set by group norm or teacher.
Child spots own errors through feedback from material.	If work is corrected, errors usually pointed out by teacher.
Learning is reinforced internally through the child's own repetition of an activity and internal feelings of success.	Learning is reinforced externally by rote repetition and rewards/discouragements.
Multi-sensory materials for physical exploration.	Fewer materials for sensory development and concrete manipulation.
Organized program for learning care of self and environment (polishing shoes, cleaning the sink, etc.).	Less emphasis on self-care instruction and classroom maintenance.
Child can work where s/he is comfortable, moves around and talks at will (yet disturbs not the work of others); group work is voluntary and negotiable.	Child usually assigned own chair; encouraged to 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, often only as fundraisers, not participants in understanding the learning process.

*Courtesy of The American Montessori Society*