

Frequently Asked Questions at CM

What is the difference between Montessori and Traditional educational philosophies?

We're so glad you asked because there is a HUGE difference. Montessori follows the child's interests and developmental readiness. The child has lessons modeled by a trained Head Guide who observes the child based on these two components. The child then has the freedom to practice this lesson repeatedly and independently until mastery. Extensions or new concepts are then modeled to the child, depending on his interest and, again, readiness. In a traditional learning environment, a child and classmates would learn from a topic decided by the teacher. There are variations of this same topic to meet the different learning styles of the children. However, the whole class moves together to complete the topic and move on to the next.

Montessori classrooms are comprised of students of multiple ages to allow younger children to be inspired and taught by older children, a natural time of developmental milestones to take place, and the older children to gain confidence and mastery of skills by teaching the younger children. Each level (Nido, Toddler, and Primary) is created based on the planes of development which are separated into cycles. Therefore, Nido ranges from 6 weeks to 18 months, Toddlers from 14 months to 3 years old, and Primary from 2 ½ to 6 years old. Because we honor the child's readiness, he can transition to the next level within an appropriate range of time because of his personal development rather than according to an age or move up date on a calendar. Within this environment, there tends to be fewer behavioral problems because of the balance of mixed ages. Traditional classrooms are grouped by age (typically one year at a time). When there are many children of the same age in one classroom, they tend to mimic each other's actions and behaviors and feed off of one another which can be positive or negative.

Children in a Montessori classroom have freedom of choice and movement. This is earned and has limitations. A child may choose to do whatever work he has had a lesson on for as long as he wants to so long as the work is being respected and done properly. There is only one of any type of work in the classroom (there are not multiple sets of the same material), which limits who can use a material and allows children to practice multiple lessons throughout their morning. In a traditional environment, children sit at a desk or table and follow a schedule designed by the teacher. There are often duplicates of the same learning materials for several children to practice the same concept.

Montessori classrooms are inquiry-based with countless purposeful materials that appeal to the child's senses and real-life experiences. Traditional classrooms at the Early Childhood level are often play-based and/or emphasize rote learning and memorization.

What should I work on at home with my child?

A vital rule of thumb with Montessori is to allow the child's work to be done in his classroom. This is because the classrooms are designed so specifically, that when the children and adults are together in the environment, the *Montessori Magic* occurs, allowing the child to work on his own, practicing his lessons, observing and gaining more interest in the work of others, and meeting his developmental needs with limited interference. The parents' role of a Montessori child is to support his learning from the classroom by following through with concepts of independence, grace and courtesy, care of

others and the environment, etc. by providing resources such as furniture that allows the child access to sinks and counters and child-sized dishes, utensils, chairs, and tables all that help him *do it himself*. As the child enters toddlerhood, he should be learning how to dress himself, continue to feed himself, and partake in care of the household like cleaning up after himself and doing light chores of folding. As the child matures into Primary, the parent continues to support the child's whole-being. Of course, reading, writing and numeration are introduced to children at this level, which is extremely exciting. The parent should support the child's learning by allowing him to write and read at his leisure at home. There is a delicate balance between what the child learns at school and what he does with these skills at home. Too much "work" at home will inhibit the natural learning process in the classroom because the child already does the work at home and loses motivation to do the work in the classroom. It's important to remember that the child's lessons are coming from a trained Montessorian who carefully adds to the progression of work. Teaching the children at home can often lead to confusion for the child since he learns the Montessori way at school. Partnering with your child's teacher to learn ways to support his growth is of the utmost importance!

How do I support my child's independence?

We've seen through the years that Montessori children and strong-willed children go hand-and-hand. This, of course, is a double-edged sword that brings gray hairs to parents far too early. However, there is hope.... and this hope is paired with a tremendous deal of patience. Parents and adults must put themselves in the child's shoes to remember how much time it takes to do tasks independently. Therefore, establishing a set routine that allows ample time for the child to complete tasks with success is key! This patience is a path that leads to so much competence and confidence down the road. Trust and believe in the process!

Why should my child complete his Kindergarten year in Montessori instead of Traditional school?

Dr. Maria Montessori's original classroom had children from ages 2 ½ to 6 years old. These children moved on to the equivalent of 1st grade. The "curriculum" she designed is meant to be implemented from start to finish between these ages to ensure a wide range of development. Children who do not complete the final year of their cycle miss the culmination of being a leader, doing intricate lesson extensions, and simply finishing what was started to achieve the whole balance of intellectual, emotional, social, and physical growth. Our graduates have a small adjustment into first grade because the environments are so different, but the skills they learned and were able to achieve from a full cycle in Montessori help them make the adjustment and enter the environments both academically and emotionally prepared (*and sometimes advanced*).

How do I know what my child is doing?

In Montessori, there are times where your child will have work that comes home for you to see, but most of the child's work comes from the classroom materials which do not come home. Regular communication with your child's Guide is important. You'll receive weekly and monthly updates from the classroom. Communication is sent regularly from administration to remind you about upcoming dates, illnesses, and other important events. We have an open-door policy in which you can come and visit/observe your child's classroom at any time as long as it is not disruptive to your child or other children—please give the classroom a heads up in advance. Conferences occur twice a year between the Head Guide and parents. Beyond this, you may email or call your child's Guide during business hours to address any concerns. We want the parents to feel confident and aware of the progress your child makes!

How do I pay my child's tuition?

We currently use **Brightwheel** for billing needs. Upon enrollment, you will be invited to sign-up. You'll have the option to pay manually or have automatic deductions from your bank account. Tuition is due either the 1st and/or the 15th of each month, depending on your billing arrangement.

What happens to my child's tuition rate when he transitions to a new level?

Transitions occur when the child is ready. Therefore, a child may move during a current billing cycle. If your child moves up midway through the end of the month, you will be charged that month the current rate from the previous classroom. The next month, you'll be charged the new rate for his new classroom. If your child transitions during the first two weeks of a month, you will be billed for the new level tuition rate.

What steps do I take to disenroll my child?

We hope your child remains at CM until the end of his Kindergarten year, but life and circumstances arise. You must give a 45-day written notice to disenroll your child. If 45-days advance notice is not given, you will be charged for 45 days of tuition from the time that the notice is given.

Do I need to sign-up or communicate plans for the summer?

CM is a year-round school. There is no need to sign-up for our summer programming. We understand and honor vacations and summer trips. However, we cannot offer a discount or partial enrollment at anytime of the year for short breaks or vacation absences.

