



How to Find a Montessori School for Your Child

A Montessori education can offer a child an “education for life.” Montessori classrooms follow the child’s natural development. A classroom is designed to help your child with the following:

- promote independence
- invite exploration and discovery,
- honor a child’s interests
- respect the child,
- build a child’s concentration
- develop self regulation
- encourage creative thinking and problem solving.

There are over 4000 Montessori schools in the country and about 7000 worldwide. The first Montessori school began over 100 years.

If you are interested in a Montessori education for your child, you may appreciate these tips to help you find the right school for your child:

What to do before contacting schools:

To learn more about a Montessori education, visit Oregon Montessori Association’s (OMA) website to read our FAQ page and link to our articles on the Parent Resource Page.

The OMA has an easy reference to all our member schools at our “Find A School” page. Once at this page select your city of interest and scroll through our member schools. You can see what age levels are offered in each school, connect directly to the school’s website and access a helpful map with directions to each school.

Check the school’s websites and read their information and school’s FAQ’s or any other resources they offer to interested parents. Jot down a list of questions.

What to expect when contacting a school:

Contact the school/s through their website or phone and ask for some further information if needed. Ask questions from your list. Some recommended questions:

What affiliation is the school and/or what Montessori training do the teachers have? Is the school MACTE accredited?

Check availability for your child. Schools try to balance their classrooms evenly by age and gender. Infant classrooms accept children between the ages of 15 months to 36 months, Primary (Children's House) classrooms, ages 2 ½ through 6 years, Elementary classrooms, ages 6 to 12 and Middle School 12 and up. Many schools will want to start a child at the young end of each age group. Some schools may have a waiting list.

School and classroom visit and observation:

Schools generally encourage parents to come for an observation first. You may be given a list of things to look for during your observation. General observations to note:

- Are the children engaged, happy, cooperating with each other?
- Is the environment orderly, inviting and attractive to the children?
- Is the teacher's demeanor with the children calm and respectful?
- Can you imagine your child in the classroom as you watch?
- Is the school community comfortable, supportive and accepting?
- Will your family be able to meet the schedule of the school?
- What does the school ask parents to do to support their work with the child in the classroom?
- What will parents need to do to prepare their child for their Montessori experience?

Some schools have an orientation class to answer many of these questions and review the Parent Handbook.

Meet the teacher:

You should plan to bring your child for a brief visit to introduce your child to their new teacher. Many schools like to have a few minutes to have the teacher present a lesson to your child and then allow your child to orient to the environment. This gives the teacher an opportunity to assess your child's readiness and interest in the program too.

After going through these steps you will know if the school is the right and comfortable fit for your child and your family. A Montessori education for your child can be a great benefit to the whole family.

The Oregon Montessori Association
is a group of schools and individuals
who support vibrant Montessori education
in Oregon and Southwest Washington...and beyond.

Visit www.oregonmontessori.org

