

### **Standard LD3:**

Our environments are based on the research and educational philosophy of Maria Montessori. She designed many of the materials available in a Montessori classroom; these materials were perfected after years of observation, study and experimentation. Every material is designed to reach a developmental goal, the use of the materials is purposeful and Montessori teachers, whom we refer to as guides, put much time and effort into designing their materials. Montessori guides use observation, record keeping and an extensive knowledge of child development to build their complex and harmonious environments. In a Montessori classroom, the environment is the primary tool for learning. The classroom is meant to be beautiful and inviting to the child, so that they will be drawn to the materials.

#### **Materials encompass all subject areas and are accessible by all children in the program.**

It is our belief that children learn best from environments that are designed for self-exploration and independence. Therefore, all materials from all subject categories (math, science, geography, art, music, reading, writing, literature, cultural, etc.) are displayed on low shelves that are at the child's eye-level. All children can access these materials independently and throughout the day. Children receive one on-one lessons on each material from the guide.

#### **Environments are segmented into different subject areas.**

The shelves are used to segment the room into different subject areas. Each shelf or group of shelves will contain different materials that appeal to that subject area and the materials are rotated frequently. In the Montessori curriculum, the materials are sequential and build upon each other.

#### **The environment includes areas for group and independent work with enough space for all children to move around freely.**

The classroom is set-up so that children have spaces to work independently or in groups. Child-sized tables and chairs are available as workspaces, some tables are small to encourage one or two children to work there while others are larger to encourage group work. Children also work on rugs on the floor; the rug is used to identify the child's workspace. The Montessori guide puts ample thought into the flow of the classroom, making sure that there is enough space for children, adults and individuals with special needs to move about without hindrance and access the materials that they need.

#### **The environment includes areas for gross motor movement and quiet reflection.**

The set-up of the classroom purposefully includes a quiet area that can be utilized by a small group of children or individuals; this area often includes books, peaceful music and materials that encourage reflection and cooperation. There are also areas for gross motor movement that are located away from quiet area; activities include walking on a line, scrubbing a table, chair or floor and tossing bean bags, among other materials designed for movement.

#### **Guides place an emphasis on representing different cultures, ages, genders and individuals of various ability in their environment.**

Along with the traditional Montessori materials, guides include cultural and thematic curriculum as well. A continent unit is studied over the course of the school year, children work on activities that represent different ethnicities and cultures. It is important to guides, that children in a Montessori classroom are exposed to different ages, genders, and individuals of different abilities and in non-stereotypical roles. Guides utilize books, art projects, cooking projects and members of the community to achieve this goal.

#### **The children in that environment produce 50% or more of the displays in the environment.**

Children take ownership of their work and often return to it for days at a time.

Children's work is displayed in the classroom, whether it is a fruit salad that a child made for snack or a map of the world displayed on the wall. In a Montessori classroom, the emphasis is on the materials so displays on the wall are minimal, but children take pride in their work

in other ways. Some artwork is displayed, however a child can be equally as gratified by displaying a tower they built or an easel they scrubbed.

**The indoor environment is at the center of the Montessori curriculum and is part of what make the method so successful.**