



Elementary Curriculum Statement

During the Elementary years of a child's development, there is a shift from the concrete, sensorial exploration in the First Plane of Development (birth-6 years) to the expanding global vision during the Second Plane of Development (6-12 years). The Elementary student is beginning to see the interconnectedness of all things. The Montessori materials and curriculum, along with a respectful and individualized learning environment, support the student's desire for learning about their world.

The Great Lessons Dr. Montessori's Five Great Lessons are the underpinnings of the Elementary curriculum and demonstrate this ecological and holistic theory concerning the interrelatedness of all things. The Story of Creation, The Coming of Life, The coming of Human Beings, The Story of Writing and The Story of Numerals are told with related projects to spark the children's interest, capture their imagination, and stimulate their natural curiosity. Each story is told over the course of a week or so followed by a period of rest and reflection. The children may then start to research parts of the story and go further into a particular topic that has caught their interest.

Language The Montessori language curriculum is rich and varied. Techniques for greater written and spoken expression are developed through a study of the parts of speech, sentence analysis, word study, and spelling. There are many opportunities for development of reading skills during read aloud time, silent reading, and small reading groups. The study of literature genres is often integrated into the cultural subjects. A great deal of work at the Elementary level is centered around the student's own research, particularly in the cultural subjects. Through this research, children learn how to utilize reference materials and use their writing skills to prepare presentations which are made to the class. Writer's Workshop is one format used for creative writing offering students experience viewing writing as a process and learning techniques in peer and self editing. Students share their work in progress eliciting questions, comments and suggestions from their peers. Their published books are read at an Authors Circle. Periodic lessons and exercises in writing mechanics and various forms of composition are given throughout the year.

Mathematics The exciting realm of mathematics is introduced using the unique and exquisite materials developed by Dr. Montessori and her son, Mario. At each new step, mastery with concrete materials leads to exploration with abstract concepts. Each concept is reinforced with concrete applications such as word problems and practical solutions. The following is covered sequentially through the elementary years: the four basic operations of arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division); problems involving money, measurement, and graphing, fractions and decimal fractions (including numeration and all operations); the study of binomial, trinomial and quadrinomial squares (mathematical analysis); squaring and the study of square root; cubing and cube root, algebraic analysis of the binomial and trinomial cubes, positive and negative integers; ratio; proportion, and percentages; introduction to algebra.

Geometry The Lower Elementary curriculum covers basic concepts of similarity, congruence, and equivalence, plane figures, study of angles, and triangles. The Upper Elementary students review and extend those early lessons, as well as study area and perimeter of plane figures, parts of the polygon, parts of a circle (including formulas for determining circumference and area), and volume.

Cultural Subjects Together many curriculum areas form what Dr. Montessori refers to as the cultural subjects. They provide the backbone of the entire elementary curriculum and offer innumerable opportunities for special projects of interest to the child. Here is an overview of the cultural subjects:

Zoology external and internal parts of animals, classification, comparison of vertebrates and invertebrates, vital functions of animals and the parts and life cycle of each member of the Five Kingdoms of living things

Botany living and non-living; comparison of plant and animal; type, shape, and parts of trees, flowers, plants, leaves and seeds; preservation and vital functions of plants; conservation of species; reproductive and protective functions; gardening projects; experiments

Geography study of land and water forms; parts of a mountain, river and volcano; map skills, earth science; chemistry and physics using hands-on experiments; cultural geography includes the study of diversity and multi-culturalism through classroom discussion, activities, and integration of literature

History fundamental needs of humans, personal timelines, timeline of life, timeline of the earliest humans to the Upper Paleolithic and the transitions to civilization, timeline of civilization, detailed studies of the Great Civilizations to the modern era, USA history, state history

Art world art history is integrated into the curriculum; techniques for drawing, painting, sculpture using various media; visual vocabulary through the implementation of pattern, texture, composition, atmosphere, perspective, value and color theory; fluency in making and interacting with art of all kinds

Music group songs, elementary chorus, history of music, study of composers, musical notation, study of recorders and percussion instruments

Drama dramatic readings, plays, and original compositions culminate in performances for others

Physical Education group games, non-competitive games, yoga; sports skill development with local gym program

Computers Key boarding is introduced in the Lower Elementary and developed further in Upper Elementary where students learn to do research on the internet and use computers to enhance their presentations.

Community Service We tie in the lessons of the “Fundamental Needs of Humans” and interconnectedness through a variety of service projects each year. The children learn about what it means to help others, as well as about the specific topics we are addressing such as hunger, homelessness, or the particular needs of the elderly. Some projects are school traditions while others are chosen, organized and carried out by the children as the year goes on. Some of our projects have included friendship boxes for the Red Cross which are then donated to the Northampton Cot Shelter; decorated holiday placemats for the Meals on Wheels program; and Sleepy Snack Sacks for Safe Passage (a shelter for abused women and children located in Northampton). For each project, either a group of children personally deliver the donations and report back to the class or personnel from the program come to accept the donation at school.

Field Trips We attend performances at local theaters and visit exhibitions at area museums and libraries to supplement our curriculum. Some are planned in advance, while others are in response to the spontaneous interests of the students. Upper Elementary students take an extended, overnight field trip, often involving camping.