

# American Montessori Society Position Paper

## Comparing Montessori 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. Encouraged to exchange ideas, discuss their work freely with others, such students' 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, noncompetitive activities, help children develop strong self-images and the confidence to face challenges and change with optimism.

<b>Montessori</b>	<b>Traditional</b>
1. Emphasis on cognitive structures and social development	1. Emphasis on rote knowledge and social development
2. Teacher's role is unobtrusive; child actively participates in learning	2. Teacher's role is dominant, active; child is a passive participant
3. Environment and method encourage internal self-discipline	3. Teacher is primary enforcer of external discipline
4. Individual and group instruction adapts to each student's learning style	4. Individual and group instruction conforms to the adult's teaching style
5. Mixed age grouping	5. Same age grouping
6. Children encouraged to teach, collaborate, and help each other	6. Most teaching done by teacher and collaboration is discouraged
7. Child chooses own work from interests, abilities	7. Curriculum structured with little regard for child's interests
8. Child formulates concepts from self-teaching materials	8. Child is guided to concepts by teacher
9. Child works as long as s/he wants on chosen project	9. Child usually given specific time for work
10. Child sets own learning pace to internalize information	10. Instruction pace set by group norm or teacher
11. Child spots own errors thru feedback from material	11. Errors corrected by teacher
12. Learning is reinforced internally thru child's own repetition of activity, internal feelings of success repetition	12. Learning is reinforced externally by rewards, discouragements
13. Multi-sensory materials for physical exploration development	13. Few materials for sensory, concrete manipulation
14. Organized program for learning care of self and self-care environment (shoe polishing, sink washing, etc.)	14. Little emphasis on instruction or classroom maintenance
15. Child can work where s/he is comfortable, moves and talks at will (yet doesn't disturb others); group work is voluntary and negotiable	15. Child assigned seat; encouraged to sit still and listen during group sessions
16. Organized program for parents to understand the Montessori philosophy and participate in the learning process	16. Voluntary parent involvement, often only as fundraisers, not participants in understanding the learning process

