

# Montessori principles



## **The main points of Montessori education are:**

- Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who differ from each other.
- Children possess an unusual sensitivity and intellectual ability to absorb and learn from their environment.
- The most important years of children's growth are the first six years of life when unconscious learning is gradually brought to the conscious level.

Children have a deep love and need for purposeful work. They work, however, not as an adult for the completion of a job, but the sake of an activity itself. It is this activity which enables them to accomplish their most important goal: the development of their individual selves – their mental, physical and psychological powers.

## **The Montessori approach is...**

The Montessori approach to education rests on the premise of supporting the tendencies and sensitivities of each individual as they present themselves as different developmental needs at each stage of development. This can be summarized in the following way:

- An environment that serves the particular needs of the child's stage of development.
- An adult who understands the developmental needs of the child and acts as a guide to help the child find his natural path of development.
- Freedom for the child to engage in his own development according to his own particular developmental timeline.

## **The Facts**

Montessori education is designed to support the natural development of children from birth to adulthood so it is not just nursery education but takes the child right through secondary school too. It is founded on the belief that within the human being there is an enormous untapped potential that needs a fertile environment and a different educational approach from the teacher in order to be fully expressed.

Great focus is given to the formation of the child's fundamental capacities during the first years of life - not just intellectual capacity but also the development of a strong character.

- If a child can think clearly and logically, concentrate and persevere he will be able to learn to read and to write, to do mathematics and to learn about the world.
- If a child can communicate and live well with others, taking into account the needs of others the social problems of his generation will be solved.
- If a child has a strong character he will be able to make a positive contribution to society

Children who have been given the right kind of support during these formative years grow into children who are self-motivated and love learning, can think flexibly and creatively and who are not only conscious of the needs of others but actively foster harmony within their peer groups.

In traditional education children are given a diet of facts dictated by an adult-led curriculum and are tested to see how much they have retained. The ability to retain information is then given a test score, which is used as a measure of academic success. All children are assumed to have the same learning style and have equal capacity to achieve certain standards. In this model the teacher is active and the child is the passive receiver of information.

In the Montessori approach the teacher takes on a different role, that is, to guide rather than teach, so the child becomes the active learner and the teacher the passive facilitator. **The Montessori curriculum is child-led.**

Children are given the freedom to develop according to their own unique timetable and as a result they are able to reach each developmental milestone as and when they are ready. Actively engaged in their own development in this way they grow into confident, socially aware, empathetic adults who are contributing members of society.