



TEDDY BEARS
MONTESSORI

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MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY & PRINCIPLES

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(ADDENDUM TO ENROLMENT CONTRACT)

Teddy Bears Montessori: Constitution, and policy documents.



MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

The attitudes and confidence developed during these formative years will serve the child throughout their lifetime. It is felt that a child is most apt to retain a positive attitude toward learning and acquire confidence in a relaxed atmosphere where the child sets his own pace, follows his own interest and is free from criticism and competition. Our mottos include “Learning to love to learn” “Follow the Child” and “Preparing for Life”. We should consider these in our daily work with the children.

Maria Montessori developed her philosophy of education after scientific, objective observation of a group of children she was assigned to work with in Rome in the early 1900.s. Her heritage to us includes continued observation of each child in our care. Through such observation, we have gathered information by which we offer suggestions to you, as parents and partners in the education process. We hope the following suggestions will maximize your child’s experience at The Teddy Bears Montessori.

It is natural for children to react negatively to separation from their parents. We find that most children will calm down within a very short time if left with a quick, positive good-bye. Staying until a child becomes involved in a task often reassures you, but increases the child’s expectation that you will stay until it’s time for them to leave, too. Show them that you trust us by leaving in a consistent, positive way. Don’t hesitate to ask us to hold the child while you leave, or to call later to find out how the child is doing. We have also noticed that body language is important; it is easier for a child to let go, who has walked in on his own rather than been carried.

Children appreciate consistency, and thrive on order. Keeping a consistent routine at home helps the child know what to expect. Rearranging the child’s schedule for your convenience or keeping them home because you have a day off doesn’t send them a positive message about the value of education.

Children do better when they attend more often. We require a minimum attendance of four days per week, having observed that children are able to better enjoy the benefits of remembering and repeating an activity until; they have mastered it. Those who come less often not only have trouble remembering activities presented, but also the ground rules which enable them to function more independently in the classroom.

Please consider scheduling vacations after the child has had a chance to normalize, or learn the ground rules of the classroom, usually at least three months after beginning to attend the program.

Here is a short list of things that you can do to help your child become more independent, and blossom into their own personalities:

- Allow freedom of movement
- Allow the child to separate from you, and to come back to you as they feel the need.

- Allow children to choose their own activity.
- Allow them to repeat an activity until they are satisfied.
- Allow the children to concentrate without interruption. Even a word, a gesture, or a facial expression can distract. Interact when the child initiates interaction.
- Try to resist helping; any unnecessary help interferes with learning. You will be shown how truly capable the children can be.
- Children should be allowed to help themselves as much as possible, including dressing & undressing themselves, hanging up & putting away their own things, and making their own choices.
- Spills, mistakes, and frustration are opportunities for learning. Let the children handle their own problems as much as possible. (step in, however, if someone may be hurt)
- Relax, be here now, and focus on the amazing child in front of you!

Helping Your Child Overcome Separation Anxiety

The most important factor in helping your child to feel confident about going to school is consistency. Order helps your child to know that today is going to be just like yesterday, and the morning routine is crucial to communicating this to your child. No matter how verbal the child, beginning each day in the same way at the same time communicates much more to them about your routine than any words you can say. In reverse, if each day begins differently, it is easy for the child to think that maybe the day will end differently, as well, and maybe Mommy will not come back this time. Be consistent.

The more you're tempted towards giving in to a lapse in routine, the more you need to maintain order. If you choose to break the routine even once, it will take as many as 50 more repetitions of the routine before your child gains back the confidence lost.

If your child refuses to cooperate, pull out the creative choices! If they need to put their shoes on, and this is not a choice, make it into one: Do you want to put on this shoe or this shoe? If your child is being picky at breakfast time, and it seems as if they won't eat: Do you want to eat breakfast now, or wait for snack time at school? or Do you want cereal or oatmeal? Again, be firm with your choices, letting your child know that these are the only choices available. He/she may choose not to choose as well, in which case you may choose for them: Do you want to choose your breakfast or would you like me to choose? In most cases, they enjoy choosing for themselves, and will prefer this over your choice.

1. Have your child choose their clothes and set out shoes ,etc., the night before, to reduce stress and help them look forward to the morning. Consistent bedtime routines also help.
2. Set the alarm for a little earlier, so you are not in a hurry and can be patient with your child.
3. Give yourself a few extra minutes before you wake your child to get yourself ready for the day.
4. Be positive. Talk about what was fun yesterday (ask your child's teachers for suggestions, if necessary).
5. Be firm. Focus on the next step in getting ready. If your child is dwelling on negative things and tries to draw you in to that sort of conversation, just repeat the routine of the morning (singing about what comes next will help to lighten the mood).
6. **Don't carry your child into school! Walking in is a confidence booster. Being carried communicates to the child that protection is needed.**
7. Our Circle Time begins by 8:00. If your child arrives by 7:30, it is easier for them to make a smooth transition from home to school.

8. Plan ahead, and give your child enough time to do as much as possible on his own. This includes putting his things away at school upon arrival.
9. Let your child know that you need their help and say; I would appreciate anything you could do to help us get to school before circle time. This lets your child know that you intend to arrive at school each day on time, no matter what. It also signals that your approximate arrival at the end of the day will be the same, too.
10. Try to arrange for your child to leave school at the same general time each day. Say; I'll see you after nap time (play time, outside time, craft time, etc.). It really helps for those first few weeks of transition to be consistent with pick up times.
11. Above all, trust the staff. We have experience is helping many sad children cope with this transition, and know what to expect. If you have questions or concerns, call us or bring them up when the child is not around. We can help, but a child whose parent is worried knows, and worries that there may be something to worry about.

Applying Montessori Principles at Home

1. Supply the child with limited choices: Would you like this or that? Remember that children are just learning to make appropriate choices and freedom within limits provides a foundation from which to make these decisions.
2. Teach the child with real things. Take time to show him/her how to handle objects with care.
3. Encourage and empower the child to do for himself. The child is far more capable than one may realize and this builds self-esteem and independence, as well as concentration, coordination and responsibility. Dr. Montessori stated; Any unnecessary aid is a hindrance to learning.
4. When you teach a child a new skill, break it down into small, precise steps: 'Clean your room' Is overwhelming, show the child how to organize a specific shelf, item or area.
5. Whenever possible, arrange your home so that the child can manage on his/her own: accessible dishes, personal items, clean up supplies, manageable clothing.
6. Respect the child's slower sense of time and allow the child time to do a task without hurrying. The child needs to repeat activities often even after it appears to be mastered. Also, remember improvement comes with practice.
7. Make discipline interesting: See how quietly you can close the door, Rather than Don't slam the door! Positive language is very important.
8. Use precise language when speaking to the child. Concise speech and new vocabulary assist the child in expressing him/herself and the power of clear communication.
9. Don't try to improve any activity your child has done while he/she is watching. Next time show the child first.
10. Protect the child from interruptions while he/she is concentrating.
11. When the child plays on the floor, supply the child with a rug or towel for activity to be placed on. This shows ownership of space and is more manageable to clean up.
12. Encourage hand washing after using bathroom, wiping nose, and before eating.
13. Remind child to clean up or put away immediately following an activity. It's important to finish one thing and pack away before moving on.
14. Be consistent with requests and expectations.

The following are some basic and important Montessori concepts:

- The small child is a lover of work. Intellectual work that is spontaneously chosen is carried out with profound joy.
- The child has a need to learn by doing. Their natural wish: ‘Help me to do it myself’ is respected.
- Since teaching is based on profound respect for the child’s personality, it leaves them room to grow in biological independence. The child is allowed a large measure of liberty (not license) which forms the basis of real self discipline.
- Since the children are freed from competition and they do not work for praise or reward, learning becomes its own true reward and the sharing of learning follows naturally.
- Since the children work from their own free choice, they are freed from the danger of overstrain. There is no pressure to gain approval, nor any feelings of inferiority or fear of mistakes with the ridicule or criticism which may follow. Such feelings or experiences could be the unconscious cause of profound mental disturbances in later life.
- The Montessori Method develops the whole personality of the child through emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels to gain confidence and awareness. The child grows into a mentally, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually healthy and happy adult.
- Dr. Montessori believed that every child delights in spontaneous activity directed toward intellectual discovery. In the Montessori environment, it is believed that the primary purpose of education is to nourish the innate possibilities of human development. Freedom of choice from a prepared environment is an integral part of the Montessori program.
- Learners at a Montessori environment are honored as unique and respected as individuals. Values such as compassion, harmony and justice develop naturally from this environment.
- The major goal is to help the children reach a stage where he/she uses her own abilities to think and decide. Self-esteem comes from a process which enables us to learn from what works and what we do well rather than from experiences which are always correcting our mistakes.

Relationship between the Directress and child:

A beautiful relationship forms between a Montessori directress and the children in her class. The directress takes on more a role of a guardian angel as opposed to a traditional teacher, she is a guide who directs the child in the correct direction and not a teacher. The directress follows the child, she directs the environment and allows the child to direct her, this way she is able to serve the child fully.

The directress has virtues that are more important to the use of words. She explains the use of the materials and is the main connecting link between the material and the child.

The Montessori directress is the caretaker of the environment, she ensures the environment is clean and tidy, takes care of the furniture and materials making sure the material is complete and ready to use. Her relationship is one of a facilitator of the child’s interaction with the material and the environment. The directress is an active observer, she observes the child’s work and development, is aware of the child’s sensitive periods. The relationship allows the directress to be a dynamic link between the environment and the child, she knows which lessons to give and when to do so. The directress has a thorough knowledge of the Montessori materials that she presents to the child and is not afraid to be imperfect in the child’s eyes she can work with the material in the classroom and if she

happens to make a mistake she does not hide it from the child as she knows it serves the child to know that adults make mistakes too.

The relationship between the directress and the child is one of mutual respect, the directress obtains consent before presenting a lesson and is never forceful with the child. She offers discreet correction and knows exactly when to intervene and when not to. The child turns to her for encouragement, approval, explanation and verification, she in return makes herself available for the child and listens patiently as well as follows up if the child asks questions. The directress acts out of a place of humility and patience and is careful never to offer a child too much praise that he may seek merit for his work. She keeps watch to ensure that a child absorbed in work is not disturbed by companions.

An honest and open relationship is formed, the child compares what the directress does with that which she says. The directress becomes a role model for the child, she is part of the environment therefore she is neat and attractive. She handles herself as well as her approach towards the children with quiet dignity. She is careful in her handling of material, body movements and speech as the child looks towards her for guidance.

Assist the children to learn the basic ground rules:

Respect for others: teach the child that he may not hurt another child OR disturb another child's work. Treat others with courtesy.

Respect for self: you may not do things which may endanger your safety.

Respect for equipment: knowledge proceeds choice, you may only work with it if a directress has shown you how. You must use the equipment with care and return it to its place ready for someone else to use. Each adult in the environment is a teacher who sets the ground rules and tone by his or her example. The adult is expected to model these rules and to assist the child in following them.

Respect for others: Show respect for the children by coming down to their eye level when speaking to them. Respect their work by not interrupting them to give direction or greetings when they are working. Use "please", "thank you" and "excuse me". Use a soft voice, slow and careful movements, and tap on the shoulder instead of calling across the room to encourage non-disruptive behaviour in the environment. Help two children in disagreement to talk it over. Enter the classroom quietly and do not interrupt activity in progress.

Respect for self: Always make sure that the child knows the proper and safe way to use something, show again before making the decision to remove the child from a situation unless the child seems out of control. The child may be redirected to another activity or an observation chair.

Respect for equipment: Show the child how to use the equipment properly, do not just give work that has not been presented in order to keep children busy. Present careful handling of equipment, if you see a child being destructive or careless DO NOT just scream at the child and kick them out of the class. Use care in carrying and moving equipment, modeling a safe way to carry it that the children may also use, i.e; don't carry two trays at once.

NEVER argue with a child, if a child wishes to argue, cut the conversation short with, "I'll be happy to talk about this when we've both calmed down. Please ask me to carry on talking to you when you are ready to talk calmly to me."

The three stages of obedience:

First stage: The child has an inner urge that directs him to certain purposeful activities, this urge is an unconscious energy. The child repeats these activities without consciously choosing to do so. When the child begins to carry out deliberate actions, this force begins to come into his consciousness. The child's will is the foundation of real obedience, the child's will has to be strong for the child to obey. The child's will is a force that urges the child to do what naturally benefits the child. Decision and action are the basis of the will's development, a strong will under personal direction is a prerequisite for real obedience. The child's will gradually develops as he adapts to the limits of his chosen task, he chooses the task so his will is completely involved e.g.; he chooses the activity of sweeping sawdust.

Second stage: It is in the second stage where we see real self discipline, he chooses himself what he is going to do, uses his intellect to vary the tasks and accepts the limitations that various points of interest impose, e.g. spooning so that no grains spill on the tray, and accepting results with responsibility by sweeping any grains dropped on the floor, emptying the dustpan and replacing the dustpan and broom before returning to his activity. It is at this stage that the child makes conscious creative use of his abilities and accepts responsibility of his actions.

Third Stage: This is controlled, intelligent obedience. The child has the power to obey, the child shows great pleasure in turning his power of obedience in serving someone else. This is where the child enjoys complying if the teacher wants something done and seeks to do more than asked. The teacher may ask the children to pack away their work and at this the child would probably respond "I have packed away can I tidy up that shelf? The third stage is one of satisfaction and happiness at obedience of acting freely and intelligently, directing the will to an understood action for someone else.

How deviations in children manifest themselves.

Normalized children reach a state of independence where they can go about the environment without having to be monitored. This means that children have developed a "discipline within", when they are not in this state there is a deviation. Children afflicted with disorder are restlessly about, they will start something and leave it without finishing as their energy directs them towards different objects.

Deviations in children manifest in various ways:

Fugues: A fugue is a kind of flight or taking refuge. A flight into play or into a world of fancy often conceals an energy that has been divided. It represents a subconscious defense of the ego, which flees from suffering or danger and hides behind a mask. A child with this deviation lives in a fantasy world.

Barriers: A weakness in the child's intellectual development takes flight into the world of illusion and the child becomes discouraged, seeks escape by withdrawing himself. The child withdraws within himself, builds a wall around him not allowing anyone near him. Imaginative role play can be healthy but continuous obsessive role play is not and forms a barrier. i.e; teacher says "come here James" and James responds "I'm not James, I'm Spiderman!" Because these energies have been misdirected the intelligence of ordinary children is lower than normalized children. A veil descends upon a child's mind rendering it increasingly less responsive, it is like the child adapts an attitude of; you speak but I do not listen, I cannot build my own world as I am too busy erecting a wall to keep you out. When this deviation is used as a defense for a long time causes the child to act as if he has lost the use of his natural faculties. The child will develop a repugnance for a particular subject, then for learning in

general, then the school, the teacher and his companions. The child eventually fears school and becomes alienated from it. Behind these barriers a hidden drama is unfolded, the soul is frequently separated from all that is beautiful outside that could be a source of happiness, his natural energies are perverted that they darken and conceal everything that would be an object of interest and love. It is possible that the child will develop into an adult that carries around a psychic barrier developed in childhood.

Attachment: Children with this deviation are of a retiring nature and their psychic energies are too weak to resist the influence of an adult. They attach themselves to an adult who they hang onto and hide behind. They substitute their own activity for the adult's and become very dependent on the adult. They are often viewed as sensitive and affectionate as they are often prone to tears, complain about everything and have the air of someone who is suffering. They are bored and cling onto the adult as if their life depends on it. They want the adult to never leave them, want the adult to play with them, tell them stories, sing to them and will even continuously ask the question "why" so that that they can always hang around for the answer and attachment.

Possessiveness: A child seeks nourishing activity from his environment, if a child does not have such an environment his psychic life is not developed. He remains weak, warped and apart from the world. He is helpless, without resources, bored, subject to whims and unsociable. If he finds no stimuli for activities which contribute to his development, he is attracted simply to things and desires to possess them. It is often found that such a child will want to possess something only when it is in use by another. To take something and keep it is easy, requiring little knowledge and love. The child's energies are diverted, the child will say "I want it" and quite often fight over it. All moral deviations flow from the decision between love and possession.

A feeling of ownership makes the child cling and defend the object as he would defend his own life. Children of this sort are constantly quarrelling amongst themselves, such disputes should not be taken lightly. There is a form of darkness when there should be light, this happens because the child's natural energies have been diverted. Possessiveness originates from an inner evil and not from an external object.

Desire for power: A deviated child will find himself in the presence of an adult whom he perceives as an extremely powerful being who has everything at his disposal. This type of deviated child, will realize that his own power will be great if he can act through an adult. The child begins to make that are limitless. An imaginative child will believe that the adult is fully capable of fulfilling all of his desires, the child eventually begins to exploit the adult. The adult will initially feel pleased in seeing the happiness he gives the child, but will soon be lead to grief as after an initial victory the child looks for a second. The more the adult yields, the more the child craves. This could lead to bitterness and the belief that the adult has spoiled the child. The adult however did not spoil the child by yielding to him but when he hindered the child's growth and caused the child's natural development to stray.

The Inferiority complex: When adults continuously dictate to children how things should be done and handled, restricting the child the opportunity to do things their own way they do the child a great injustice. The child will look upon himself as an inferior being worth less than the objects he is forbidden to touch. Adults are continuously interrupting the child and breaking into his environment, this lack of consideration leads to the child thinking that his own activities are of no value. When adults constantly humiliate children, making them aware of their weaknesses dampen the child's desire to act. When the adult persuades the child that his impotency lies within himself, a cloud descends upon his mind, the child develops the inner obstacle known as the inferiority complex. A child deviated with an inferiority complex will experience difficulty making decisions, will be timid and withdraw before during difficulties and criticism, will experience frequent tears and have an appearance of despair. Such a child lacks the most remarkable characteristics of a 'normal' child, those of self-confidence and sureness in action.

Fear: Adults often take advantage of children's fear in order to achieve obedience. It is often found that children who are more dependent on their parents are the ones that fear most.

Lies: One of the most serious defects is lying. There are variations of lies, normal lies and pathological lies. Attention is drawn through lying and to the possibility of unconscious deceit on the part of the child. There are many lies not connected with self-defense that are told by normal children in different circumstances. Lying can also originate from the child's desire to narrate something fantastic. Other lies are those of lazy children don't want to do their homework. Weak and retiring children make up lies on the spur of the moment, these lies are not thought out but a kind of defensive reflex.

There are five modes of learning:

Sensation: children have an inbuilt way of learning through their senses: touch, taste, smell, hearing and sight.

The Absorbent mind: the absorbent mind soaks up unconsciously the habits and language of the environment.

Imagery: There is a powerful interplay between sensation, perception and imagery. A child uses imagery to relate past experiences to his memory.

Through symbols: This includes 3 aspects involving language:

Inner language, meaning of words and used in thinking.

Receptive language, the organization and translation of all words.

Expressive language, following from sufficient organization of both inner and receptive language. It is necessary for these to occur in sequence for the development of a young child.

Conceptual: Classification and organization of information combining to create rational thought and creative thinking and understanding of the world.

Sensitive periods:

At certain periods in the child's life, he develops certain sensitivities and interests. During these sensitive periods the child is much more capable of very effective learning. The absorbent mind plays a big role in development during sensitive periods, this is an unconscious and conscious period where the child gains knowledge about the environment and himself.

The child is drawn to certain activities during sensitive periods, he follows an inner urge to fulfill a need. During sensitive periods, children can take in an enormous amount of knowledge without fatigue. Through close observation and noting of which activities seemed to benefit and attract the children, Maria Montessori found that these were suggested by special, transient sensitivities to certain categories of stimuli. During a sensitive period, the child absorbs one part of the environment with exclusion to others.

Montessori called these broad, but distinct and temporary sensitivities, the 'sensitive periods'. Montessori noted six of these sensitive periods:

- **Sensitive Period for the development of sensory perception**, begins at birth and continues till age five. During this sensitive period, the child needs to exercise all the sense faculties as fully as possible. This is where the child will touch and feel everything around him and experiences great frustration by parent's who do not understand his sensitive period and constantly instruct the child not to touch anything.

- **Sensitive period for language**, begins round three months until five and a half. The child develops an early sensitivity to the human voice and the sight of the human mouth speaking. The baby has a special sensitivity to and unconsciously selects from all the varied sounds in the environment, just human conversation.
- **Sensitive period for order**, starts round one year of age, peaks at two and subsides when the child is three. During this time of the child's development, the construction of intellect appears to be going through a vital organisational phase. Impressions and experiences are being place in ordered patterns that form the basis for the child's emerging world view, which then begins to make possible the ordered expression in language of ideas about the world. When order in daily experience is constant, it allows the child to build an understanding of life on the foundations of the patterns perceived. External order will facilitate the child's development of an internal sense of order. External order would include constancies like keeping material objects in the same location, following the same daily routines and using the same procedures in doing things with the child.
- **Sensitive period for small detail**, occurs round age two to two and a half. This is where the toddler notices little things in the background instead of focussing on larger objects right in front of them. The purpose of the sensitive period to detail is to awaken the mind's control over the child's attention. It is therefore important to development that the child be able to broaden the field of observation available to the absorbent mind and to tighten the concentration of the inner intellectual structure in processing what is absorbed. This sensitivity to small detail, draws the child to the tiniest objects, separated fragments, faintest noises, hidden corners and all the phenomena previously overshadowed by the brightest, biggest objects, the fastest moving or the loudest. When the child is drawn to a small thing, the sensitivity holds the child's attention there for an extended period, fostering the ability to focus on that one small stimulus to the exclusion of all else.
- **Sensitive period for co-ordination of movement**, the child enters this period at round two and a half years old to four. Co-ordination of movement means bringing the body under control of the will, being able to use one's fingers, hands, feet, mouth etc precisely the way one wants to. The sensitive period for co-ordination of movement means that there is an involuntary inclination to perform and repeat movements purely for the sake of gaining greater and more precise control. The importance of this sensitive period is that it helps the child become physically capable of pursuing activities that in the absorbent mind's second phase are consciously selected to provide the greatest benefit to the unfolding intellectual structure.
- **Sensitive period for Social Relations**, starts round two and a half through to five years of age. This sensitive period helps to orient the child towards intellectual development after age six. This occurs mostly in a social setting and consists of the gaining of social and cultural knowledge. The child pays special attention to the effect of one's behaviour on the feelings and actions of others, and how one's behaviour is affected by the judgements and tendencies of a group of children. This sensitive period enables recognisable affections and friendships to develop, it allows play to be co-operative and makes mischief to appear conspiratorial. The child is interested in and readily absorbs the basic rules of social relations, such as manners, mealtime customs, graceful movement and showing consideration for others.

What happens when we starve children of the right environment for these ‘Sensitive Periods’:

A child goes through the sensitive periods at certain stages in his life, there is a starting point, peak and end to all the sensitive periods. During these sensitive periods the child is able to absorb huge amounts of knowledge without fatigue. The child in a sensitive period will be attracted to and interested in work and movements of that sensitive period, he will focus and be completely absorbed in things of that particular sensitivity excluding everything else in the environment.

A sensitive period is referred to as a window opportunity, once a window opportunity of a certain sensitive period has been missed either it can never return. Intelligence and knowledge that the child could have easily absorbed now no longer appears to take place naturally and with ease, it now turns into a difficult task where one has to be taught.

This teaching can never compare to the absorbing during a sensitive period, the child will not gain half as much from the teaching experience as he would have from the sensitive period been met and nourished. His work now appears tiring and tedious at times even boring as he has no urge toward it or anything that attracts his interest to the particular stimuli or work.

When sensitive periods are starved and not met there are more effects than just missed intellectual learning. This could lead to vandalism and aggression, violent reactions which are often put down to naughtiness and temper.

WHAT IS “MONTESSORI”?

The Montessori Approach is a philosophy of education with the fundamental belief that a child learns best within a social environment that supports each individual’s unique development.

It is a system based on profound respect for the child’s personality, helping him grow in all areas of his development. The Montessori Approach differs from other educational approaches because it is based on the principle of freedom within a carefully prepared environment suitable to the nature of the child. The role of the teacher is also a differing point. In the Montessori classroom the teacher is known as a “directress” – she guides, directs and observes the child and one of her main functions is to prepare the environment for the child.

The Teddy Bears Montessori is run implementing Dr. Montessori’s philosophy, within the context of our modern society. The underlying philosophy at the School is “learning to love to learn” and everything that occurs within the School will be aimed at achieving this.

Who was Maria Montessori?

Dr. Maria Montessori based her educational approach on her observations of young children. As the first female doctor to graduate from the University of Rome, Montessori became involved in the education and treatment of “retarded” children. In 1907, she was invited to run a childcare centre for the children from the slum area of San

Lorenzo. She called it “Casa dei Bambini” (Children’s House) and based her programme on her observations that young children learn best in a homelike setting, filled with developmentally appropriate materials that provide experiences contributing to the growth of self-motivated, independent children.

How does it work?

Each Montessori classroom operates on the principle of freedom within limits. Each school has its own set of “ground rules”, which may differ from school to school, but are always based on a core Montessori belief – respect for each other and the environment.

The child is free to work at his own pace, with the materials he has chosen. The directress relies on her scientific observation to determine which new activities to introduce to the child. The aim is to encourage active, positive and self-directed learning.

The three-year age span in each class provides a family-like grouping where learning can take place naturally. More experienced children share what they have learnt with the other children while simultaneously reinforcing their own learning. This encourages an atmosphere of cooperation rather than competition.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- To develop a positive attitude towards school and learning
- To develop high self-esteem and self-respect
- To develop and foster an abiding curiosity through exploration
- To develop habits of persistence and initiative
- To foster self-discipline and a sense of order
- To develop socially acceptable behaviour
- To acquire basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning
- To help develop each child’s innate potential.
- To encourage active, creative thinkers, within an atmosphere free of fear, ridicule and discrimination.
- To provide a positive, nurturing framework

*“Whatever an education is,
it should make you a unique individual, not a conformist; it should
furnish you with an original spirit with which to tackle the big
challenges;*

*it should allow you to find values which will be your road map through life;
it should make you spiritually rich, a person who loves whatever you are doing, wherever you are, whomever you are with; it should teach you what is important.”*
- John Taylor Gatto (*Dumbing Us Down*)

*If I Had My Child to Raise Over Again
If I Had My Child to Raise All Over Again,
I'd build her self-esteem first, and the house later.
I'd finger paint more, and point my finger less.
I would do less correcting and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.
I would care to know less and know to care more.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
I would run through more field and gaze at more stars.
I'd do more hugging and less tugging.
I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.
I would be first less often, and affirm much more.
I'd model less about the love of power, And
more about the power of love.*
- Diane Loomans

Questions for parents to ponder

- What were the most important factors that led you to select a Montessori education for your child?
- What are the most important goals that you have for your child's education?
- What skills, knowledge, and attitudes do our children need to be prepared as adults for living in the 21st century?
- In what way does Montessori provide our children with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that they will need to succeed in the real world?

The Outcomes of a Montessori Education

Studies comparing children attending Montessori schools with those enrolled in traditional schools have focused on the following educational outcomes, and shown Montessori children to have more strongly developed:

Intrinsic Motivation: Intrinsic motivation is the innate desire that drives the child to engage in an activity for enjoyment and satisfaction.

Ability to Handle External Authority: The child is able to accept the ground rules established by external authority as appropriate boundaries in his interactions within the school community. These ground rules are internalized, enabling the child to function with or without the presence of the external authority.

Creativity and Originality of Thought: Children are confident using the knowledge and skills they have acquired to express their own ideas and creativity. They recognize the value of their own ideas, respect the creative process of others and are willing to share regardless of risk. Children find joy and satisfaction in self-expression.

Social Responsibility: Social responsibility requires the awareness that one's actions impact the welfare of the group and that one cannot attain complete independence and autonomy until one contributes constructively in a group process. Individuals are able to make a positive contribution to their community and groups within that community.

Academic Preparation: Academic preparation entails providing children with skills that allow them to become independently functioning adults and life-long learners. As children master one level of academic skills they are able to go further and apply themselves to increasingly challenging materials across various academic disciplines. Children recognize that there is always room to grow in their abilities to read, write, speak, and think clearly and thoughtfully.

Experiential learning: Children learn how to learn by doing. Children are encouraged to explore materials, integrate new concepts, analyze data, and think critically. Academic skills are essential to learning and knowing, not the aim of learning and knowing.

Autonomy: The autonomous child is self directed, composed and morally independent.

Confidence and Competence: The confident and competent child perceives himself as being successful, has a realistic understanding of accomplishment and has the ability to learn from his mistakes. Competence is the capability for success through taking risks, reflection and self correction.

Spiritual Awareness: Spiritual awareness is embodied in the child who is compassionate, empathetic, and sensitive to the natural world and the human condition.

Montessori Education is a science which uses scientifically developed materials to assist the development of children in all areas of life.

Introduction to Montessori Education

Basic Elements Of The Montessori Approach

by Tim Seldin, Director of The Montessori Foundation

The Montessori Classroom

Montessori classrooms are bright, warm, and inviting. They are often filled with plants, animals, art, music, books, and interest centers filled with intriguing learning materials, fascinating mathematical models, maps, charts, fossils, historical artefacts, scientific apparatus, perhaps a nature table.

You will not find rows of desks in our classrooms. Montessori learning environments are set up to facilitate child discussion and stimulate collaborative learning. One glance and it is clear that our children feel comfortable and at home.

Children will typically be found scattered around the classroom, working alone or with one or two others. They will tend to become so involved in their work that we cannot help but be tremendously impressed by the peaceful atmosphere.

It may take a moment to spot the teachers within the classrooms. They will be found working with one or two children at a time, advising, presenting a new lesson, or quietly observing the class at work.

In her research, Dr. Montessori noted specific characteristics associated with the child's interests and abilities at each plane of development. She argued that a school carefully designed to meet the needs and interests of the child will work more effectively because it is consistent with basic principles of psychology. Rather than fight the laws of nature, Montessori suggested that we "follow the child" and allow our children to show us how to facilitate the development of their human potential.

This focus on the "whole child" led Montessori to develop a very different sort of school from the traditional adult-centered classroom. To emphasize this difference, she named her first school the "Casa dei Bambini" or the "Children's House."

There is something profound in her choice of words, for the Montessori classroom is not the domain of the adults in charge, but rather a carefully prepared environment designed to facilitate the development of the children's independence and sense of personal empowerment.

This is a true community of children. They move freely within the rooms, selecting work that captures their interest, rather than passively participating in lessons and projects selected by the teachers.

In a very real sense, even the youngest children take care of their own child-sized environment.

They go to the bathroom without assistance (if they need help, they will get it too!). When something spills, they help each other carefully clean things up. Parents are often amazed to see small children in Montessori classrooms cut raw fruits and vegetables, sweep and dust, carry pitchers of water, and pour liquids with barely a drop spilled. These little ones normally go about their work so calmly and purposely that it is clear to even the casual observer that this is their environment: The Children's House.

The Montessori classroom is commonly referred to as a prepared environment. This name reflects the care and attention that is given to creating a learning environment that will reinforce the children's independence and intellectual development.

Respect, Intelligence, and Independence

We know that young children are full and complete individuals in their own right. They deserve to be treated with the full and sincere respect that we would extend to their parents. Respect breeds respect and creates an atmosphere within which learning is tremendously facilitated.

Montessori schools believe very strongly that intelligence is not fixed at birth, nor is the human potential anywhere near as limited as it sometimes seems in traditional education.

Success in school is directly tied to the degree to which children believe that they are capable and independent human beings. If they knew the words, even very young children would ask:

"Help me learn to do it for myself!"

By allowing children to develop a meaningful degree of independence and self-discipline, Montessori sets a pattern for a lifetime of good work habits and a sense of responsibility. Children are taught to take pride in doing things for themselves carefully and well.

Montessori Teaches Children to Think, Collaborate, and Discover

Our approach is designed to help each of our children discover and develop his or her unique talents and possibilities. We treat each as a unique individual learner. We know that no two children will learn at the same pace,

nor will they necessarily learn best from the same teaching methods, and our goal is to be flexible and creative in addressing each child as a unique individual.

At our school, children and teachers learn to collaborate in the process of education rather than mindlessly compete. Our children discover their own innate abilities and develop a strong sense of independence, self-confidence and self-discipline. In an atmosphere in which children learn at their own pace and compete only against themselves, they learn not to be afraid of making mistakes. They quickly find that few things in life come easily, and they can try again without fear of embarrassment. One way of thinking about the difference between our approach and one that is more traditional is to consider that while learning the right answers may get our children through school, learning how to become a life-long independent learner will take them anywhere!

Our children are learning to think, observe, and reflect; not memorize and quickly forget.

Rather than present children with loads of right answers, their teachers ask the right questions and lead the children to discover the answers for themselves. Learning will become its own reward, and each success will fuel their desire to discover even more.

The teachers encourage our children to think for themselves and become actively engaged in the learning process.

Freedom of Movement and Independently Chosen Work

Montessori children are free to move about, working alone or with others at will. They may select any activity and work with it as long as they wish, so long as they do not disturb anyone or damage anything, and so long as they put it back where it belongs when they are finished.

The Integrated Montessori Curriculum Classrooms are organized into several curriculum areas, which include language (reading, literature, grammar, creative writing, spelling, and handwriting), mathematics and geometry, practical life skills, sensorial exercises and puzzles, geography, history, science, art, music, and movement.

Most rooms will include a classroom library. Each area is made up of one or more shelf units, cabinets, and display tables with a wide variety of materials on open display ready for use as the children select them.

Our curriculum is organized into a spiral of integrated studies, rather than a traditional model in which the curriculum is compartmentalized into separate subjects, with given topics considered only once at a specific grade level. In the early years, lessons are introduced simply and concretely and are reintroduced several times over succeeding years at increasing degrees of abstraction and complexity.

The course of study uses an integrated thematic approach that ties the separate disciplines of the curriculum together into studies of the physical universe, the world of nature, and the human experience.

Literature, the arts, history, social issues, political science, economics, science, and the study of technology all complement one another. This integrated approach is one of Montessori's great strengths. *Montessori*

Classes Encompasses a Three-Year Age Span

Montessori classes are organized to encompass three-year age span, which allows younger children to experience the daily stimulation of older role models, who in turn blossom in the responsibilities of leadership. Children not only learn "with" each other, but "from" each other.

We find that most often the best tutor is a fellow child who is just a bit older.

Some parent's worry that having younger children in the same class as older ones will leave one group or the other short changed. They fear that the younger children will absorb the teachers' time and attention, or that the importance of covering the School Readiness curriculum for the five-year-olds will prevent teachers from giving the three- and four-year-olds the emotional support and stimulation that they need. Both concerns are misguided.

Working in one environment for three years allows children to develop a strong sense of community with their classmates and teachers. The age range also allows especially gifted children the stimulation of intellectual peers, without requiring that they skip a grade and feel emotionally out of place.

Each class is an essentially stable community, with only the oldest third moving on to the next level each year. At each level within a Montessori school, the curriculum and methods are logical and consistent extensions of what has come before.

How Can Montessori Teachers Meet the Needs of So Many Different Children?

Montessori teachers play a very different role from those played by traditionally trained educators. While the stern disciplinarians of the past may be an endangered species, many teachers are focused on maintaining order and on covering a pre-defined curriculum. Most see their role as dispensing facts and skills to complacent children.

The Montessori teacher's role is that of a facilitator and guide. He or she is usually not the centre of attention and will not normally spend much time working with the whole class at once. Her role centers around the preparation and organization of appropriate learning materials to meet the needs and interests of each child in the class.

The Montessori teacher has four primary goals:

- to awaken our children's spirit and imagination,
- to encourage their normal desire for independence and high sense of self-esteem,
- to help them develop the kindness and self-discipline that will allow them to become full members of society, and
- to help them learn how to observe, question, and explore ideas independently. The Montessori teacher is a coach, mentor, and friend.

The teachers rarely present a lesson to more than one or two children at a time and limit them to a quick, efficient presentation. The objective is to intrigue the children so that they will come back on their own to work with the materials. Lessons centre around clear and simple information that is necessary for the children to be able to do the work on their own: the name of the material, its place on the shelf, the ground rules for its use, and some of the possibilities inherent within it.

The teachers closely monitor their children's progress, keeping the level of challenge high.

Because they come to know the children so well, Montessori teachers can often use their own interests to enrich the curriculum and provide alternate avenues for accomplishment and success.

The Montessori Materials - A Road from the Concrete to the Abstract

The basis of our approach is the simple observation that children learn most effectively through direct experience and the process of investigation and discovery. In her studies of children's learning, Dr. Montessori noted that most children do not learn by memorizing what they hear from their teachers or read in a text, but rather from concrete experience and direct interaction with the environment. Asking a child to sit back and watch us perform a process or experiment is like asking a one-year-old not to put everything in his mouth. Children need to manipulate and explore everything that catches their interest. This led Montessori to emphasize the overriding importance of concrete learning apparatus and to the development of the Montessori materials for mathematics, sensory development, language, science, history, and geography.

The Montessori learning materials are not the method itself, but rather tools that we use to stimulate the child into logical thought and discovery. They are provocative and simple, each carefully designed to appeal to children at a given level of development.

Each material isolates and teaches one thing or is used to present one skill at a time as the child is ready. Montessori carefully analyzed the skills and concepts involved in each subject and noted the sequence in which children most easily master them.

To facilitate the prepared order of the environment, the teacher arranges the materials on the shelf following their sequence in the curriculum flowchart. The materials are displayed on low open shelves that are easily accessible to even the youngest children.

They are arranged to provide maximum eye appeal without clutter. Each has a specific place on the shelves, arranged from the upper-left-hand corner in sequence to the lower right. Materials are always arranged in sequence, from the most simple to the most complex, and from the most concrete to the most abstract.

Preparing Tomorrow's Innovative Thinkers Today

In a world of rapid change and new discoveries, we can only guess at the skills our children will need to succeed in the 21st century. Now, more than ever, the essential lesson is learning how to learn.

The most important years in our children's education are not high school and college, but, instead, their first twelve years of life. This is when their character and values, self-image, basic skills and knowledge, and appreciation for culture and the arts are formed.

Montessori Schools offer our children a world-class education, along with an education of the heart, that nurtures their self-confidence, personal creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit.

It offers them the most challenging academic program that they can handle in a course of study that includes creative writing, mathematics, geometry, algebra, history, geography, economics, philosophy and peace education, botany and zoology, the physical sciences, second language study, art, literature, music, drama, yoga and physical education.

We can see our children as they truly come to love learning and begin to discover their true potential as young men and women. Our School's goal is to nurture each child's intelligence and creativity. As families, we hope you come to schools like ours to give your children an outstanding preparation for higher schooling, university, and life.

We affirm that education begins at birth and continues throughout life. While our emphasis is on our children, we are a centre of support for all of us to continue learning and developing toward becoming whole and healthy people.

Our goals for children are for them to be open-minded and compassionate, to gain a sense of themselves and others, and to understand and appreciate the diversity of the human spirit.

The Teddy Bears Montessori wants children to be well trained in the basic academic disciplines, to fulfill their creative potential, and to gain satisfaction in their physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development. We want children to love learning and to value knowledge, creativity, and humor. Finally, we hope they will be responsible, critical, and caring members of a society and recognize that they have the power and resources to effect change as well as the self-esteem and confidence to pursue their goals.

We believe that every member of our community has a fundamental right to be treated with respect, regardless of age.

We respect the fundamental human needs, rights, and dignity of each person, no matter how young, as a full and independent person who is engaged in the ongoing process of development.

During this process, while honoring the right to self-determination, we model and encourage certain values: kindness, honesty, warmth and openness, respect for each person's uniqueness, tolerance, cooperation, good

sportsmanship, and non-violence. In keeping with the true meaning of the word discipline, which is to teach, we prefer to model and encourage appropriate, kind and considerate ways to behave in various situations.

We use positive reinforcement whenever possible to encourage progress and acknowledge contributions, rather than focusing on the rules and the consequences for breaking them.

We encourage and model ways to negotiate in conflict situations so that whenever possible everyone can win and at the very least everyone feels heard and that her feelings and needs are respected.

As necessary we cue and remind people of appropriate behaviors before they forget.

When behaviour is inappropriate and a gentle reminder isn't enough, we intervene and respectfully but firmly stop the behaviour.

Our ultimate goal is to encourage self- discipline and self-motivation as the reasons for behaviour rather than fear or motivation from without.

We recognize that misbehavior comes from discouragement. We therefore do not label a child as “bad,” but instead try to recognize the mistaken goals of the misbehavior that usually involve an attempt at searching for a place in the family or community, even if it is an undesirable place. We then look to find appropriate ways to encourage the individual.

Intelligence is not rare. We approach learning seeking to understand each person's uniqueness and guide her individually and at her own pace, through the range of learning skills so she fully realizes her potential. We do not subscribe to the “Bell Curve” theory for measuring performance, and respectfully submit that the vast majority of people have the intelligence and natural ability required to learn everything they need to lead full, happy, and productive lives.

We celebrate the natural diversity of human beings, be it in learning style, interests, or definition of what makes a happy and successful life.

Wisdom can be cultivated.

We believe that true wisdom is the ability to listen to your heart and know how best to put your intelligence to work for you. In order to achieve this goal, self-esteem, human dignity, and emotional well-being, as well as the ability to communicate and cooperate effectively with others, must be valued at least as highly as academic and material success.

We affirm the ideal of the renaissance person. Our ultimate goal is to produce renaissance men and women who have not only learned how to learn, but also have an innate love of learning, a wide range of interests, and an openness to new ideas and possibilities.

Self-esteem is the crucial ingredient for the full expression of a person's potential.

Nurturing self-esteem: We strive to base every interaction between community members, from how we discipline to respecting personal learning styles and stages of development, on this principle. This is the very fabric of our community and our educational methods. Learning from experience: We consciously encourage our children to not be afraid of taking risks, but rather to use the countless positive and negative experiences that everyone inevitably has in a lifetime as non-threatening feedback on their progress and personal growth.

The Teddy Bears Montessori's expectations: In all cases we set our expectations high, not asking individuals to do more than they are capable of, but consistently stressing at all grade levels the importance of careful work and pride

in accomplishment. The reward is not in a quantity of work achieved but the satisfaction of work done well for its own sake. We carefully build a supportive environment for the unhurried mind to move steadily toward the pursuit of excellence.

Competition: We encourage the development of respect for natural abilities. While we allow people to experience failure by separating the deed from the doer in all things, from earliest times we seek to minimize any negative effect on self-esteem that failure or lack of natural ability in an area might have. We do not believe that it is either necessary or appropriate to inspire unrestrained academic pressure and scholastic competition among children. We cultivate the ability to accept success with grace, and failure or loss with dignity, and resolve to build on the experience. We ensure the right to choose whether or not to participate in competitive activities, and we stress the principles of good sportsmanship.

The development of a whole, healthful being requires the nurturing of our many dimensions, including the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional.

Spiritual: While we feel it is each person's task to develop his or her own understanding of the nature of the universe and the individual's place in it, we proceed on the premise that our world is a beautiful, positive, loving place, a setting that provides the potential for each person to lead a full, free, joyful, and healthy life.

Intellectual: The intellect is an important tool in the shaping of our world. Through the development of our thinking abilities we refine our emotional responses, we clarify our picture of the universe, and we develop the discipline to maintain vibrant health. *Physical:* Recognizing that the intellectual and emotional potential and capabilities of our brains are, like any other organ, dependent on a clean, healthful bloodstream, we acknowledge our place in the physical world and seek to discover, understand, and adopt the lifestyle habits most appropriate and beneficial for our bodies and minds. Among these are fresh air, pure water, exercise, sunlight, and proper diet.

Emotional: Our emotions are complex and powerful and it is very important that we learn to feel them fully and without fear, identify them correctly (in ourselves and others), respect them, and accept them. It is equally important, however, that we learn to harness their power and not let them control our lives unchecked.

The Teddy Bears Montessori is built around the stages of personal development.

Developmental stages: Our staff is actively involved in a continuous study of human development. This study includes keeping abreast of current theories on development, regular child observation, and a constant evaluation of the curriculum to ensure that it is appropriate for the developmental stages of our children.

Active learning: We promote active rather than passive learning by:

1. Encouraging children to pursue studies in all areas of their spontaneous personal interests;
2. Using hands-on, "experiential" learning whenever possible rather than lecture and drill, whether through concrete manipulative learning materials, experimental discovery seminar discussions, independent library research, field investigation, or computer simulations; and
3. Bringing the child to a sense of closure and recognition of having reached a pre-established goal for learning.

Passage to abstraction: To facilitate this process, we consistently work from a very concrete level of experience to the abstract. To aid children in learning, we begin by giving them the "big picture" and work from this toward an increasing level of detail. This concept has created a spiraling curriculum in which skills and concepts are presented and reintroduced at increasing levels of complexity and abstraction over the years.

External structure: As necessary we provide community members with sufficient external structure and support in a committed effort to ensure that their developmental needs are met.

We do this in a manner that reflects our expectations and philosophy.

The Teddy Bears Montessori provides a broad preparation for life, balancing academic excellence with the development of personal and practical life skills.

Success: We design our educational program to maximize each person's academic and personal success. We strive to encourage people to build on their strengths and personal learning styles and learn from their mistakes.

Academic success: We encourage skills that support independent and successful learning, critical thinking, cooperative projects, reflective reading, problem solving, library research, use of technology, techniques for effective study, test taking strategies, and techniques for focusing attention.

Personal success: We consider it equally important that our community members be successful human beings who can establish healthy relationships and achieve happiness in their personal lives. We teach our children to pay attention to and respect feelings, both their own and those of others. We help them to learn to solve conflicts effectively and fairly, and to express their feelings in a healthy manner. Group dynamics and communication skills are also stressed.

Practical life: To facilitate and encourage a sense of independence, we deliberately teach a wide range of practical life skills appropriate to each child's level of development. We regard this as a vital element affecting the design of our entire curriculum. These practical life skills include the following:

1. Eye-hand coordination and the use of simple tools.
2. Grace and courtesy: appropriate ways to handle situations kindly.
3. Household Engineering: how to clean and set tables, do dishes, cook, sew, iron, infant and child-care and laundry.
4. Health and Safety: the development of sound habits of safety, nutrition and hygiene.
5. Empowerment: We make a concerted effort to empower people, helping them to learn how to make responsible choices for themselves, to recognize that they are assuming increasing control over their lives as they mature, and to discover how to make a difference in the world around them by positive efforts and contributions to others.

We recognize that the first six years are critical to the development of one's life.

“In an open environment, that is in one that is suitable to his age, a child's psychic life should develop naturally and reveal its inner secret. Unless this principle is maintained, all later attempts at education will only lead one more deeply into an endless maze.”

- Maria Montessori.

We place a primary emphasis on building relationships with families as early as possible in order to help parents recognize the uniqueness of their child. We also work together to enhance the parents' ability to parent.

We believe that the experiences a child has both at home and at school in the first six years are the most important of his/ her lifetime because here his/her self-concept and his/ her concept of the world and her place in it are set in stone. What the child will attempt and whether or not they will succeed at it are profoundly influenced by these beliefs about oneself.

Although we as Montessori parents, teachers and children are living proof that changes can happen after this critical period, the changes are accomplished with a chisel and hammer on stone rather than with gentle fingers on wet clay.

The Teddy Bears Montessori is designed for flexibility in its methodology and use of resources.

Meeting Individual Needs: We use the Montessori approach, along with additional approaches and materials from the larger non-Montessori educational community, to provide opportunities for enrichment beyond the basic curriculum. We strive for individualized pacing and adaptation of the classroom program (when possible) to meet varied styles of learning.

Diverse Learning Styles: We regard a mix of backgrounds and abilities as a positive and important element in our community, and often find that because of our flexibility and individualized approach, children who may have been considered “special needs” or “learning disabled” in other environments can often experience a greater level of success within our community.

We strive for a balance between freedom, order and responsibility.

We interpret the general principle of Montessori education, “follow the child” to refer to the importance of allowing people to pursue areas of spontaneous interest whenever possible.

However, if a child needs more direction at certain times or is not internally motivated in a given area, then we feel it is our responsibility to acknowledge the personal preference but to still require that the necessary work be completed.

To facilitate the development of independence and a sense of engagement with the community we strongly encourage participation in day-to-day classroom management, care of the environment and decision making. We seek to help each community member to see the value of commitment both to our community and to the community of man, and that the good of the individual and that of the community and each of its other members is much more interdependent than some recent cultural trends would have us believe.

We seek to show and teach our children that the freedom and education they receive here come with the responsibility to help others both in the community, and those less fortunate but no less deserving. To show them that the responsibility to change our world for the better lies with all of us, and that service needs to be an accepted part of everyone’s life if we are to achieve this goal. Opportunities to perform community service in the community at large include, sharing of clothes and toys with underprivileged children, hosting disadvantaged communities for special occasions, collecting food and needed items for the underprivileged, among other things.

As educators, parents and citizens of the world with the mutual goal of world peace we consider it our responsibility to model and encourage tolerance both to our children and to each other. Tolerance of differences in ability, in colour, in culture, in beliefs, in thought, in ways of doing things, in dress and in physical appearance.

Tolerance of the particular process that each of us must go through on our particular path in life, balanced with the self-esteem and self-confidence not to be threatened by these differences.

Ultimately, we wish for every community member to be willing to accept full responsibility for their behaviour, their attitudes, their experiences, and in short for their lives. The enormous reward that comes with accepting this responsibility is the freedom to choose and create the type of person they wish to be, and the life they wish to lead.

Strengthening our connection with nature and the environment is an integral part of The Teddy Bears Montessori.

We believe that being involved physically with nature and directly with the environment are basic to being a whole and healthy human being.

We consciously work to foster in each person a strong sense of belonging to the web of life.

We celebrate diversity in our community and acknowledge the unique contributions of all individuals, who enrich and inspire our personal growth.

We are constantly modeling and encouraging communication between all members of our community. We would like all community members to be versed in skills of active listening, negotiation, fair debate, empathy for another person's position, and the ability to stand up for oneself and say no without guilt if someone is encroaching on their rights.

Parenting Education: We encourage parents to participate in workshops that can help them to refine their parenting strategies, to facilitate the development of independence, responsibility, self-confidence and self-respect in their sons and daughters and in themselves. We recognize parenting as an extremely difficult, rewarding and valuable job for which we have had little preparation and for which in the modern world we get little support. We are committed to find ways to provide that support for families from birth through adulthood.

Quotes from a Spiritual Master who was nominated for two Nobel peace prizes: Dr Maria Montessori

"The greatest sign of success for a teacher; is to be able to say, "The children are now working as if I did not exist."" - Maria Montessori.

"If help and salvation are to come, they can only come from the children, for the children are the makers of men." - Maria Montessori.

"Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war."
- Maria Montessori.



"We cannot know the consequences of suppressing a child's spontaneity when he is just beginning to be active. We may even suffocate life itself. That humanity which is revealed in all its intellectual splendor during the sweet and tender age of childhood should be respected with a kind of religious veneration. It is like the sun which appears at dawn or a flower just beginning to bloom. Education cannot be effective unless it helps a child to open up himself to life"

- Maria Montessori.