

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Education for a Lifetime

Our highly technical and competitive world demands self discipline, critical thinking and initiative from our children if they are to succeed. Athens Montessori School helps to develop children who will adapt easily to new challenges. They are not taught simply to memorize or to follow rigid lesson plans, but to develop reasoning skills and their own natural learning patterns.

Montessori education is spontaneous and stimulating. Montessori brings children's natural abilities into play by allowing them to master skills at their own pace. Montessori instructors encourage natural learning patterns because they respect a child's ability to explore the prepared environment in a way that is most productive for them.

The students express genuine enthusiasm in education because they recognize learning as its own reward.

Montessori education develops both personality and character. Social responsibilities and practical life exercises cultivate a sense of self-sufficiency, cooperation and self-esteem. Active participation in the selection of work allows each student to practice independence, initiative and honesty. Community meetings in self-governance of the classroom, teach fairness, mutual respect and communication skills.

“A child is mysterious and powerful and contains within himself the secret of human nature.”

Dr. Maria Montessori

PRIMARY PROGRAM (3 TO 6 YEARS)

Thanks to the diligent and loving efforts of parents, children arrive for the Primary (3 to 6 years) Program with fully formed language, walking, an adventuresome spirit of exploration and learning.

The Montessori teacher provides a scientifically prepared environment in which each child finds opportunities to exercise their unfolding powers of exploration and adaptation.

The curriculum is organized into 5 avenues of self-directed activity for the child's exploration:

- Practical Life- activities of varying difficulty around the theme of how to care for yourself and the environment.
- Sensorial- activities for comparing, grading, matching.
- Language- developing a broad vocabulary and phonetic based reading.
- Mathematics- concrete, hands-on learning of quantity, number and number operations.
- Cultural Studies- geography map puzzles and depictions of plants, animal, geographic and cultural features of the continents.

In addition, the children enjoy daily experiences in Music, Creative Movement and Visual Arts. The three year age span of the class allows the older children to model for and mentor the newer students. Age appropriate, sequential challenges in all areas of the class enable children to construct themselves and their learning at an optimal pace.

“The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the period from birth to the age of six, for that is the time when intelligence itself is being formed.”

Dr. Maria Montessori

LOWER ELEMENTARY (6 TO 9 YEARS)

The Elementary Cosmic Curriculum is a balanced, comprehensive, interdisciplinary model for continuing to spark each child's expanded range of exploration.

Challenging work in the areas of Math, Reading, Grammar, Science, History and Geography are woven into the daily fabric of learning. Visual, sensorial sequential materials provide ample practice and repetition in basic concepts which the child constructs a foundation for gradual abstraction and application of concepts.

Daily journal writing, research projects, booklet making, and science experiments develop the students powers of observation and self expression. Portfolio assessment allows the student and teacher to track progress on a daily basis and set goals for each week.

Every student receives the series of "Great Lessons" beginning with the "Story of the Universe" to spark their imaginations around questions of history and science. Next they learn a Matrix called "Fundamental Needs of Humans" to give them a framework for exploring the history of civilizations.

The unique capacity of elementary children to classify is stimulated through Botanical and Zoological studies.

Special teachers continue instruction in Spanish, Music, Creative Movement, and Physical Education and three day trip to an ecological camp highlights the spring quarter.

UPPER ELEMENTARY (9 TO 12)

Building on the foundations laid down in the Lower Elementary students delve deeper into such subjects as Anatomy, Astronomy, Ecology and Cultural Studies. The important life skill of time management is forged through the coordination of year-long and week-long assignments.

Frequent opportunities for presentations to the class develop the children's skills in creative collaboration, public presentation and leadership.

Regular field trips expand the experiences of the students and culminate in a three year cycle of weeklong trips to a forest, an ocean and a major cultural center.

Students expand their sense of community through active participation in service projects for the school and for the Athens community.

Computer resources allow students to extend the grasp of their imaginations and to more fully integrate their learning.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Adolescence is a challenging age, highly influenced by the cues society gives. In today's world, the young adolescent struggles with the mixed messages society gives and often find themselves unprepared to meet the challenges they face outside of the classroom walls.

Adolescents demand to see relevancy in the work they do. Our Middle School program of work and study, guided by Dr. Montessori's vision for the age, is specifically designed to meet adolescent developmental needs. Our highly **interactive, interdisciplinary** program offers adolescents opportunity for experiencing practical roles that integrate and apply academic studies.

Students extend their studies in math, science and technology by managing a nature reserve, campus weather station, organic gardens, greenhouse, woodland, pond and a business enterprise. Our history and foreign language program is enhanced through travel. Our Language Arts, humanities and Fine Arts offers performance opportunities. Through our many community service projects and internships, students experience firsthand practical roles that provide them with greater connections to society and the world. In this way, students are able to achieve a higher level of responsibility, independence, self-esteem, and a love of lifelong learning.