

## **Why Should I Consider Montessori Kindergarten?**

*A time of decision:*

For many parents who have had their children in Montessori pre-school, the logical step is to continue into Montessori Kindergarten and potentially Montessori Elementary. Other parents, planning to go to another educational system may wonder where a good transition time might be.

Let me explain some of the advantages of continuing Montessori, at least through your child's kindergarten year.

The Montessori learning experience is cumulative: what a child learns in the kindergarten year depends on what he has learned in his previous Montessori years. The kindergarten year is the culmination of this learning. In many ways the previous years are wasted if the child does not continue working with the Montessori materials to complete the three year cycle.

In the Montessori environment there is great emphasis on having a child use the concrete manipulative to transition into abstract thinking. Kindergarten is the time when the transition should not be broken. If the transition is allowed to take place in the Montessori environment, children will learn to read, do mathematical operations and begin to think about the world in terms of inter-related facts. It is a social time as well, when children are starting to interact with each other in work and play, and to pay attention to the thoughts and feelings of others.

There are crucial differences between a Montessori kindergarten and a traditional one. In most traditional kindergarten classes, the primary emphasis is on developing social skills with some preliminary work in cognitive "readiness", whereas, in a Montessori classroom the primary emphasis is on developing cognitive skills on the firm foundation of sensory and motor skill training. In a Montessori classroom, a child progresses at his/her own rate; there are no pressures to "catch up" or "slow down" to the level of the class. The child working at his/her own rate develops good work habits such as initiative, the ability to process information, and the ability to persist in completing a task. The emphasis is on making each child feel competent in his or her own abilities and interested in learning for its own sake.

At Montessori Educare Academy the student to teacher ratio is lower than most traditional school classes. This allows the teacher the opportunity to concentrate on presenting the detailed math and language materials to the children. The child gets a very strong foundation in these "basics". There are also science, geography, social, art and large motor activities. In all these areas, the child learns actively through planned and spontaneous activities.

When it comes time for you to decide your child's educational future, please do not hesitate to discuss your questions with your child's teacher.