

Growing a Montessori Model



A History & Overview

The Montessori Theory of Development, or Method, is woven throughout all of City Garden's learning programs.

The Montessori Method was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori in the early 1900s, and fosters rigorous, self-motivated growth for children and adolescents in all areas of their development – cognitive, emotional, social, and physical.

Montessori as a Pedagogy

Montessori is a method of education that is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning and collaborative projects.

In Montessori classrooms children make creative choices in their learning, while the classroom and the highly trained teacher offer age-appropriate activities to guide the process.

City Garden incorporates these core components of the Montessori Method of education in our preschool (Primary) and Elementary programs:

1. Trained Teachers (Guides): Our classrooms are staffed with Lead and Assistant Guides, providing a student: staff ratio of 13:1 or fewer. All of our Lead Guides are Montessori-certified or are pursuing their certification through our Institute.

2. Multi-age Classrooms: Our Elementary classrooms include children with 3-year age spans in order to facilitate mentorship among the students and encourage leadership development. Our Primary classrooms include Kindergarten-only classrooms and fee-based preschool classrooms.

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Core Components Continued:

3. Montessori Materials: All of our classrooms are equipped with specially designed didactic (Didactic meaning “designed or intended to teach,” these are the specially-designed instructional materials—many invented by Maria Montessori—that are a hallmark of all Montessori classrooms.) materials that provide a hands-on approach to learning.

4. Child-directed Work: Our students are given agency to self-select work, leading to intrinsic motivation and sustained attention. Construction is the coming into being of what was not there before. Self-construction is the building up of the human personality through purposeful activity with materials in an environment. This construction is individual yet takes place in a social context. As humans, we all undergo this self-construction, developing our personalities based on the experiences we have.

5. Montessori Work Cycles: Our students are provided an extended period of “free choice” that enables them to work at their own pace and without interruption. A Montessori work cycle is an uninterrupted block of time. During this time students are able to explore the prepared environment and engage with materials of their own choosing after carefully creating a workplan. The time is meant to give them opportunities to enjoy the work they love, while also cultivating basic life skills.