

Language Curriculum

The Montessori language curriculum provides the child with the tools for expression and communication. All aspects of literacy are covered in the program. In this area, all reading and writing is built on an ability to understand patterns of relationships and recognising symbolism. All of the language exercises also support the mathematical mind.

Language is interwoven through all aspects of the curriculum. Specific language activities include oral language, written expression and reading. The pre-school child builds upon oral language to discover the relationship between sound and symbol. These discoveries enable the child to make his or her thoughts visible (writing) and to decipher the thoughts of others (reading).

Further activities spark conscious awareness of the order and function of words in the child's native language. The primary school child discovers the powerful role of written language in the development of human civilization. Language becomes a major tool for both exploration and expression through research and oral and written presentations. Continued study of grammar and syntax is integrated with the study of literature and style.

THE CLASSIC CARDS:

In Montessori, children begin the reading program as an infant with the "Classic Cards". These cards can be based on anything that excites the child. Examples include gardening, animals, birds, fruit and plants.

The "three period lesson" is utilised throughout all of Montessori teachings.

- 1) The naming – through listening, the child identifies objects using perception and experience.
- 2) The reinforcement – through recognising the child identifies the object. Eg. "Point to the frog" when shown the cards of two animals.
- 3) The retrieval – through association and memory the child says the name. This is used only when the child has absorbed the information.

The Classic Cards, along with rhyming, reading texts, big books, speaking, listening, and music each assist in infant language development. Repetition is also essential for language.

THE SANDPAPER LETTERS:

When the child is developmentally ready, they are shown lower-case Victorian cursive letters, which are cut from sandpaper and attached to either a wooden or strong cardboard backing. A child begins by expressing an interest in the sounds of the letters and at this time the Montessori teacher will begin introducing the child to sandpaper letters. With the sandpaper letters the teacher will introduce the phonetic sounds to the child.



Eighty per cent of the time, the letters of our alphabet have a phonetic sound. A child who can use this knowledge is far ahead of the child who is taught through a look/say approach. In the Montessori approach, the sounds of the letters are taught before the child is introduced to the names of the letters. The phonetic sound of each letter is taught first, and the names of the letters are taught later. In addition, since some letters can represent more than one sound, the other sounds which are less frequently used than the phonetic sounds are also taught later.



THE SANDPAPER LETTERS

THE MOVABLE ALPHABET

I-SPY:

I spy is another activity where children learn the initial, medial and final sounds of a word. This game includes a small tray of physical objects that have phonetic relevance. These objects are introduced as “I spy with my little eye something beginning with ‘c’ ending with ‘t’ and a middle sound of ‘a’.... The answer is ‘cat’”

THE MOVEABLE ALPHABET:

A set of lower case wooden Victorian cursive letters that are stored in a segregated box. The consonants are pink and vowels are blue in colour. This moveable alphabet is used in addition to the I-Spy activity when the child is developmentally ready.

THE NOUN FARM:

This activity introduces the child to nouns; names of animals and equipment related to farms. Children can begin to use verbs and continue on to other parts of speech with the farm i.e. “the pig is sleeping.” All nouns and other parts of speech are colour coded throughout the cycle one language program moving on to grammar and analysing parts of a sentence, s/he can recognise -- a Noun is black, -- a Verb is red -- an Adjective is dark blue.