



The Village School

Montessori Education | est. 1977

Toddler Program (18 to 36 months)

The Toddler Program provides a safe, supportive environment that introduces the child to the Montessori classroom in a small, intimate setting. Our primary goal in this program is to foster in the child a sense of independence, a joy in exploration, and a love of learning. Each child is respected as an individual.

The Toddler environment is prepared especially for this age group, with materials and activities that introduce the young child to basic concepts, support large and small motor development, and nurture self-esteem. Here a child begins to explore the world outside the home, learning to communicate with others, establishing self-control, developing social skills, and building self-confidence.

The classroom is designed to appeal to children's unlimited curiosity as they explore within a safe environment. Children freely choose activities that have been carefully selected and prepared by their teachers with the developmental needs of each child in mind. The daily routines of the classroom provide the consistency that toddlers need as they learn to coordinate and organize their movements with a growing sense of independence.

The Toddler Classroom is divided into the following work areas:

Practical Life

This area focuses on daily living activities that help develop a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem. The children learn how to care for their classroom environment and physical needs, such as dressing, undressing, using the bathroom, hand washing and table etiquette.

Sensorial

This area includes materials that encourage children to use their five senses to develop classification and discrimination skills. Sensorial materials that engage the child in matching, sorting and grading activities form an important foundation for learning in all other areas such as math, language and science.

Language

Language development, a critical area for children in this age group, is encouraged through imitation, modeling and facilitation of creative expression. The classroom includes materials for naming, matching and sorting objects and pictures. A reading corner provides a cozy area where children may look at books by themselves or with friends, encouraging conversational skills. Teachers read to individual children as well as to the class, inviting active participation in the stories. Students are exposed to different types of music and musical instruments. Singing with puppets and finger-play is a favorite daily activity that fosters language development. Children are developing vocabulary rapidly during the first three years of life. The Toddler Program fosters the child's understanding and internalization of newly acquired words and the ability to use them expressively.

Mathematics

Providing a sense of order within the class routines, designing sequencing activities and introducing number concepts all help develop mathematical thinking. Classical Montessori, as well as teacher-prepared materials, reinforces the child's understanding of quantity and number recognition.

Science

Beginning concepts in science are incorporated into many areas of the indoor and outdoor environments. These include books, songs, puppets, puzzles and language area activities which spark an awareness of plant and animal life. In addition, classroom pets provide opportunities for children to observe and care for animals, fostering a sense of responsibility for living things.

Art

This section includes finger painting, painting with brushes, sponges, strings, stencils and a variety of other materials. Through use of a variety of materials, which include crayons, markers, chalk, stamps, stickers and Play-doh, children express themselves independently and creatively as they develop their small motor coordination.

Physical/Motor

The classroom contains cause-and-effect activities, as well as building materials which promote creativity and imagination. These less-structured activities are very important for development of language and social skills. Part of the daily classroom routine includes singing and movement activities, so important for gross motor development. These are also incorporated into the outdoor play time and weekly gym period. Indoor circle time helps children learn patience, self-control and improve listening skills, as well as learn to follow verbal directions.

Specials for Toddlers – Music, Movement and Spanish

Children respond spontaneously and express themselves freely when they hear music, naturally incorporating their listening into physical movement and dance. Music forms an integral part of the activities in our Toddler and Primary Programs; daily circle time involves singing and movement that integrates rhythm, language and physical coordination through a variety of familiar and newly introduced songs. A weekly scheduled visit from our music teacher enriches their musical exposure through the introduction of Orff instruments and related songs and movement activities.

Maria Montessori emphasized the importance of physical movement as integrally linked to mental and cognitive development. Coordinated, purposeful and expressive movement is an inherent part of the Montessori prepared environment at every program level in our school. Toddler and Primary students visit the gymnasium with their classroom teachers to enjoy activities designed to develop coordination, motor planning, control of movement, and cooperative play.

Young children learn their first language(s) through immersion and absorption of the spoken languages that surround them. They are at the most sensitive period for learning new languages, as well as their native one.

Children in our Toddler and Primary programs are introduced to Spanish within their classroom settings, through the use of songs, objects, pictures and culturally related stories from Spanish speaking countries. Basic vocabulary of familiar, everyday objects and expressions are introduced in Spanish through direct involvement in engaging and enjoyable activities. Classroom materials invite the children to practice with the vocabulary introduced during class lessons.

Each classroom has 10 children and 2 teachers, a 5 to 1 student/teacher ratio.