



The Watson Hall Montessori School

Dear Prospective Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for your interest in The Watson Hall Montessori School (WHS). The Watson Hall Montessori School seeks to encourage a love of learning in all children using the basic tenants of the Montessori method of instruction. According to Dr. Maria Montessori, “All victories and all human progress are dependent on the strength that comes from within.”

The Watson Hall Montessori School believes in the intrinsic power of each individual. This power begins in the womb and is developed over our lifespan. The Watson Hall Montessori School provides an interdisciplinary approach to education. We offer three developmental program levels. These programs are the Children’s Flat, the Children’s Cottage, and the Children’s House. The programs correspond to the following chronological ages of development:

- ◇ **The Children’s Flat**-ages 24-36 months, Toddler
- ◇ **The Children’s Cottage**-ages 3-6 years, Primary
(Kindergarten for ages 5-6 years)
- ◇ **The Children’s House**-ages 6-9 years, Lower Elementary
(1st-3rd grades)

Using the Montessori philosophy and curriculum, we encourage an environment that supports the unique mind, body, and spirit of each child.

The vision of The Watson Hall Montessori School is to create an environment that promotes a love of learning, self-empowerment, and creativity in the young mind.

Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori method was developed by Maria Montessori in the early 20th century. Maria Montessori was a physician who was dedicated to the care of young children. Through careful and deliberate observation, Dr. Montessori began to understand

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the unique construction of the young mind. Through her experience in psychology and education she developed a dynamic method of directing young children.

The Montessori pedagogy was developed through careful construction of the prepared environment. Children are introduced to an environment specifically suited to their developmental needs and provided the freedom to explore in the manner most natural to them. This is referred to as “the child’s true and normal nature”. In this environment the teacher allows the child to direct and utilize their natural intuitions and exploration.

The environment is a crucial concept of the Montessori philosophy. The environment includes the experiences the child gains in the classroom, the home, in nature, and in the global society.

The following concepts are major components of the Montessori philosophy:

- ❖ **Inner guidance of nature-** Children are guided by an inherent internal locus of control.
- ❖ **Freedom for self-directed learning-** Children are encouraged to follow their innate interests.
- ❖ **The Prepared Environment-** The classroom is prepared in a manner that is most conducive to freedom, independence, and positive stimulation for self-directed learning.
- ❖ **Normalization-** This process is best observed in children between the ages of birth and six years of age. This involves the success children feel after they have accomplished a self-directed task in an environment suited to their needs. This heightens the overall learning process for the individual child.
- ❖ **The Absorbent Mind-** Children are sponges when placed in an appropriate environment. The human brain is constantly working to put information in a context of understood experiences. When information is questioned, analyzed, and assimilated; true learning has occurred.

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- ❖ **Multi-age grouping-** Typical Montessori classrooms are heterogeneous. Children of varying chronological ages learn from the Prepared Environment and each other. This approach builds community, social development, and peer modeling.

Montessori Planes of Development

Maria Montessori believed learning occurs in waves as opposed to the linear model adopted by other theorists of her time. The waves are called planes of development. These four planes are grouped into the following ages: birth-6, 6-12, 12-18, and 18-24. The Watson Hall Montessori School programs focus on the first two planes of development.

The first plane, birth-6 years, is a time of tremendous growth. According to Montessori, humans are capable of leaning more at this stage than any other. This is the time of the Absorbent Mind when children absorb and process large amounts of information about their environment. This is the timeframe in which Maria Montessori believed it was best to begin educating children. Children process information using the conscious, the subconscious, and the unconscious areas of the mind. The most heighten areas of the mind at this age are the subconscious and the unconscious. Due to this understanding, Maria Montessori believed the child's Prepared Environment is the foundation of successful future learning.

The second plane of learning, ages 6-12, is a time when the conscious mind begins to develop and emerge. Children at this age become more aware of the role they play in both the classroom environment and greater society. During the second plane the child begins to express increased self-discipline. In this phase children begin to acknowledge the inherent value in their actions, independent of what others may desire or request. This type of independent thinking builds self-confidence. Maria Montessori believed children who have a sense of autonomy in the classroom begin to understand learning as a life-long process.

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Montessori Curriculum: Children's Flat and Cottage

The Montessori Curriculum is based upon an internal locus of control in each child. The environment is established in a manner to ensure each child is able to identify an activity that best expresses his/her self-directed interest.

The following components are major areas of the Montessori Infant/Toddler and Primary curricula:

Practical Life- Children use materials to stimulate and develop coordination and the ability to conduct daily living activities such as buttoning, lacing, scooping, pouring, and categorizing.

Sensorial- Children use materials to develop multiple senses. In conjunction with specialized tools, they begin to understand and master concepts related to sequence, volume, and dimension.

Mathematics- Children are introduced to mathematical operations such as addition, subtraction, division, multiplication, numeration, and place value. These materials vary in construction. All the materials are created to allow the use of multiple senses.

Language- Children master the alphabet and the sounds associated with each letter. Children also develop phonetic skills such as vowel, consonant, and cluster sounds. In addition, children learn to master their fine motor skills and coordination, culminating in the use of a pencil to create written language.

Culture- This curriculum component has numerous areas. Science, History, Geography, and Foreign Language are all incorporated in cultural lessons.

The aforementioned curriculum components are constructs of our Children's Flat and Children's Cottage programs. These programs are structured for children 2-6 years of age.

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Montessori Curriculum: Children's House

The Watson Hall Montessori School explores the Montessori ideology of 'Cosmic Education'. This theory acknowledges and creates an environment where children begin to learn that our universe is a series of interconnected ideas, events and people. The classroom becomes a microcosm of the universe. These connections are also expressed by the interdisciplinary approach taken within the core areas of the curriculum. Our students are exposed to core areas or subjects, however, lessons are not isolated to a particular subject. Learning takes place on multiple levels and across different genres. Children in the Children's House, Lower Elementary, are exposed to the following core areas:

Advanced Practical Life- Children use materials to master coordination and the ability to conduct daily living activities. This area is a continuation of the Practical Life area in the Toddler and Primary programs. Children explore the following activities: pattern designing using common household materials, food preparation, cooking, textile creation, sewing, knitting, and shopping.

Geography-Montessori children learn at a very young age that our actions impact our environment. This core area introduces scientific theories related to the creation of the universe. Children explore the manner in which the physical earth changes over time. In addition to learning about physical geography, children investigate the manner in which human beings relate to the Earth.

Art & Music- This core area is an important aspect of the children's overall learning experience. Self-expression and creativity is highly encouraged. Children are exposed to various artists, genres, and vocabulary in music and visual art.

History- This area models the framework from which the Montessori pedagogy is derived. Children explore the interconnectedness of living beings. Children are also introduced to the concepts of basic human needs; while learning the method in which people across the world have met these needs over time. Ancient History, World History, and American History are revealed and researched.

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Language Arts- Children become more confident in their ability to decode and comprehend written language. They also begin to analyze sentence structure which leads to increased creativity in the expression of written language. Children master lessons on grammar, word study, etymology, and spelling. While acquiring the foundation of written language, children also explore creative prose, poetry, and drama.

Mathematics & Geometry- This core area builds upon the concrete lessons experienced in the Children's Cottage. Children begin to grasp more abstract methods of thinking and solving mathematical operations. Children are exposed to addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and algebraic equations. Geometry is an open-ended field of exploration for children at this level. They learn the nomenclature of various lines, angles, circles, and polygons.

Science-Children explore the basic beginning of life and the universe through matter and astronomy. Topics in biology, chemistry, and physics are introduced. Children also learn proper nomenclature for plants, animals, and humans. Through the core areas of botany, zoology, and Health Science, they explore the survival and reproduction of single-cell and multi-cell organisms.

Peace- Montessori children at the elementary level begin to have a better understanding of self and their impact on various physical and social environments. In this core area, children explore topics such as quiet time, understanding feelings, conflict resolution, cultural awareness, and environmental awareness. Children are encouraged to be ambassadors and protectors of peace as they grow and interact with the world.

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The Watson Hall Montessori School Classroom Instruction

The Watson Hall Montessori School strives to provide each child with a quality education and a learning environment conducive to success. Ensuring appropriate class size is the first step to creating a successful environment. The Children's Flat classroom has an average of twelve children. The Children's Cottage and the Children's House classrooms have an average of seventeen children. Each classroom has a Lead Teacher and one Teaching Assistant. Our Director of Instruction supervises all Lead Teachers and Teaching Assistants. The qualifications of Lead Teachers are as follows:

Lead Teacher—The Lead Teacher is responsible for providing opportunities for learning in accordance with Montessori curriculum and guidelines provided by The Watson Hall Montessori School.

Qualifications:

Minimum Education/Certification:

- Bachelor's Degree (preferred) or 120 semester hours of college credit
- Montessori certification or knowledge/understanding of the Montessori pedagogy
- Pediatric First Aid/CPR certified
- Meet MSDE OCC qualifications

Special Knowledge/Skills:

- Teacher should warm, motivated, and flexible.
- ability to speak and write in English fluently
- demonstrated proficiency in working effectively and positively with a variety of people
- ability to creatively solve problems and situations
- ability to counsel children and parents
- the ability to use a computer for word processing and email

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Specialty and Extra-Curricular Activities

Watson Hall Montessori offers a variety of special activities and lessons throughout the school year and summer months. Toddler, Primary, and Lower Elementary classes take field trips throughout the year. Field trips are a thoughtful and well-prepared component of the interdisciplinary learning environment. Children are offered Spanish, Yoga, Music, and Art as a part of the core curriculum.

The Watson Hall Montessori School Admissions Criteria

The Watson Hall Montessori School has a rolling admission for the Children's Flat and the Children's Cottage. Applicants for the Children's House must interview and visit prior to full admission. It is important that the child is assessed on his/her ability to function in our unique environment. The Watson Hall Montessori School is coeducational and accepts qualified students regardless of race, color, religion, or ethnic origin. A student shall be 5 years of age on or before September 1st of a school year to enter the Kindergarten program during that school year. Parents may submit written request to enroll their child in Kindergarten at 4.5 years of age. This early enrollment will require testing and a conference with the child's Lead Teacher and the Administrative Head. Generally, priority consideration for enrollment is given to applicants in the following order: (1) qualified siblings of current Watson Hall Montessori students; (2) qualified students with previous Montessori experience; (3) all other qualified applicants.

We hope the information contained in this prospectus will provide you with a comprehensive overview of our program. Please feel free to contact us with questions regarding our educational program.

“...you yourself must be filled with wonder and when you have acquired that, you are prepared.” – Maria Montessori