

EDUCATION

Craze for Montessori in London



Montessori pedagogy places a great deal on sensory experience, manual work and aesthetics.



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Six institutions teach Montessori pedagogy in London, including the [Montessori Academy of London](#) which has five locations for instruction. These schools contribute to the diversity of the education system in London and generally in Ontario.

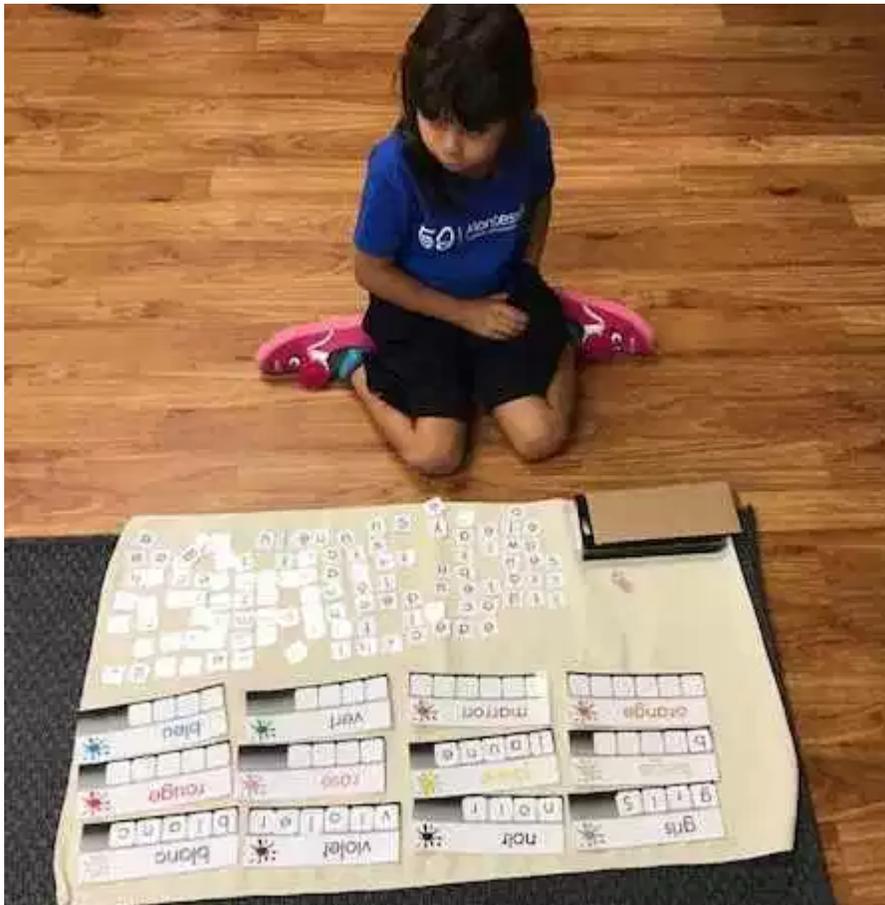
They are also the hallmark of alternative education in Ontario and the rest of Canada.

Diversity of languages and religions

The London school landscape is marked by both religious and linguistic diversity. The city is divided between English, French and private schools.

Private schools add to this bilingualism a significant diversity: schools of Christian obedience, Islamic, Japanese evening schools, for example.

It is in this particular educational system that Montessori schools intervene. As one teacher at the Montessori Academy of London tells us, learning French begins at 18 months and up to college level.



Francophone options

Montessori is making a profound change in the London school landscape as it offers an alternative pedagogy.

"The elementary French program for students aged 6 to 11 aims to simultaneously develop four language skills: speaking, listening, writing and reading," says a teacher at the Montessori Academy of London. They are transmitted through a variety of activities such as nursery rhymes, songs, story stories, role plays and games. "

The six institutions in question - Montessori Academy of London, Byron Woods Montessori School, Gibbons Park Montessori School, North Woods Montessori, Pinetree Montessori School and London Montessori School - range from early childhood (from 18 months) to college (14 years old).

At the upper level, "students apply and deepen their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary by producing texts of different lengths, including paragraphs, small essays, speeches and skits," said the teacher.

Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori, Italian doctor and pedagogue, invented in 1907 a new method of education. Quickly, she teaches internationally and stays in the United States, from 1914 to 1918.

The goal of Montessori pedagogy is to put the child and his sensory experiences back into the heart of education. This method works to ensure that the child enjoys learning. Thus, he learns at his own pace.

His relationship with his classmates and his teacher is horizontal: everyone can self-correct and help the other in their learning.



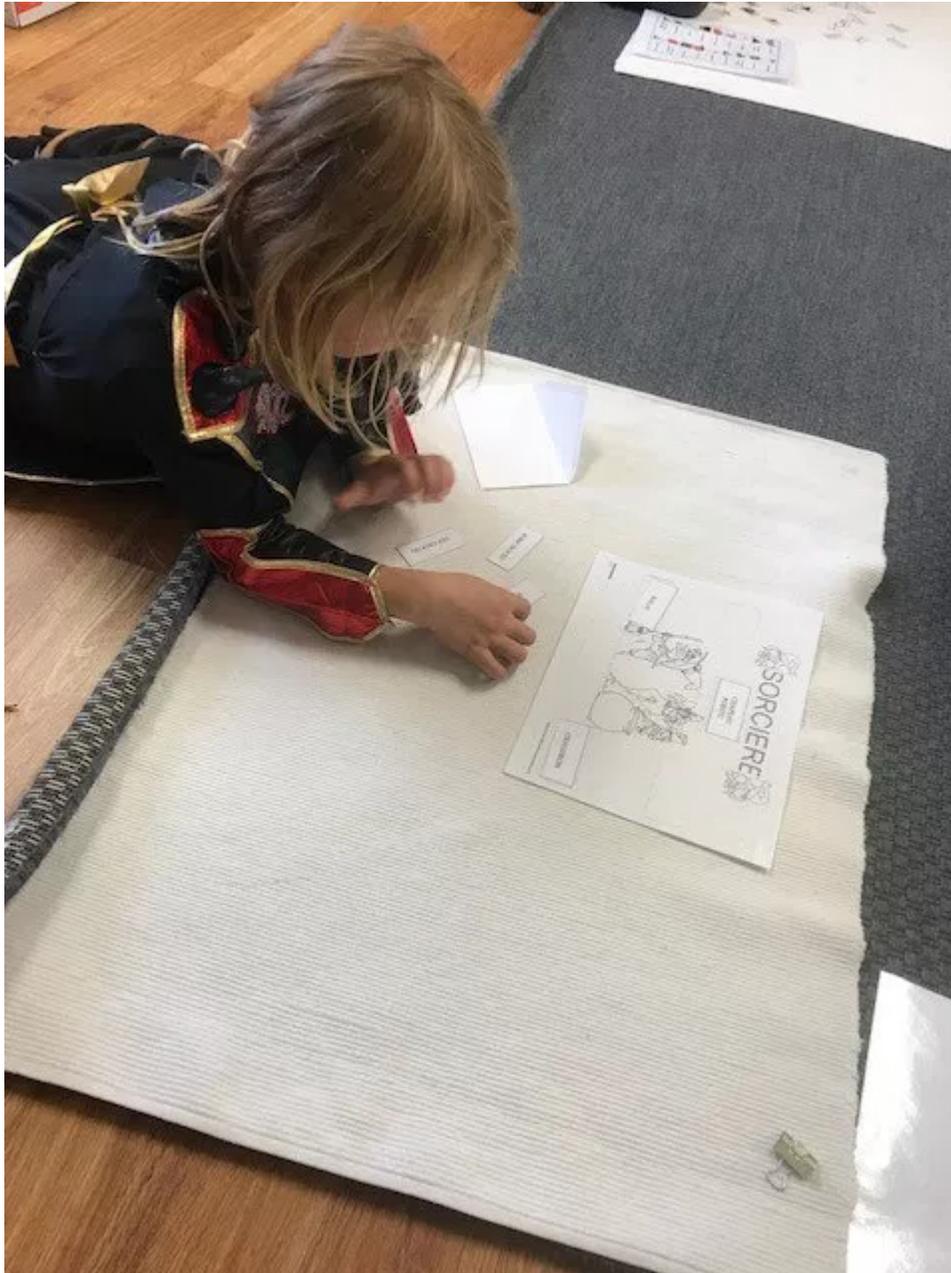
Sensory material

One of the concepts of Montessori is the sensory material: the child has, within the school, concrete tools to apprehend abstract notions. Aesthetics and manual work play an important role.

At the Montessori Academy of London, for example, additional activities complete the teaching of French in a practical way, such as "a meal inspired by a French region", "a trip to Quebec" or "a London celebration of tradition Quebec's carnival".

By focusing education not on the accumulation of knowledge, but on the role of each individual, Montessori approaches the New Education, a pedagogical trend that dates back to the Renaissance, but begins to materialize in some schools in France and in England at the end of the 19th century.

In this context, there is also the Freinet school, the Steiner or Dewey methods. In London, for example, the Waldorf School provides Steiner-Waldorf pedagogy.



Bell and his wife

25,000 schools around the world, in about 100 countries, for about 1 million children, about 500 in Canada, half of them in Ontario: Montessori is one of the most popular alternative pedagogies on the planet, with those from Freinet or the work of John Dewey.

She has trained celebrities as diverse as George Clooney, Anne Frank, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jeff Bezos (Amazon), Larry Page and Sergey Brin (Google).

Maria Montessori's pedagogy is rapidly reaching North America, thanks in part to journalist Sidney McClure. It took root in Canada with Alexander and Mabel Bell: the couple began a school experience in Nova Scotia, in Baddeck, starting in 1912. The second school was opened in Calgary in 1919 by Margaret Potts.

Note that the first college-level program was launched in London!

Private schools

In 1929, Maria Montessori created [the Association Montessori International \(AMI\)](#) to perpetuate her work and prevent it from being altered by external movements. Canada is part of this association.

Ontario has many Montessori schools in Toronto, Oakville, Kingston, Brampton, Ottawa and London. Some schools prefer to borrow certain elements of Montessori pedagogy by mixing it with more traditional forms.

There are few alternative schools in Ontario public school boards. [The Viamonde School Board](#) managed for several years a "Montessori" school that only had the name, and was renamed Mathieu DaCosta (adjacent to its headquarters in Keele and 401).

The cost of registering for these schools varies between \$ 5,000 and \$ 30,000 a year, which is a lower average than for all private institutions.



Maria Monessori with American journalist Samuel Sidney McClure in 1914. (Photo: Library of Congress)

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