

Montessori Academy of London: Level by level brochures

Toddler Program: Children 18 months - 3 years old

To support a time of profound physical, social, and intellectual transformation, Montessori Academy of London's Toddler program is specifically based on the needs of children ages 18 months to 3 years. Because this is the richest period of brain development, a wide variety of activities are presented to the child and repetition is encouraged.

Practical Life

Practical life skills are an important part of the Toddler program. Children of this age have a natural desire to imitate the adults around them. Toddlers strive for independence and naturally love order and organization.

Activities are carefully selected and prepared to be home-like, reflecting the activities of the adults they observe.

Sensorial

Children in the Toddler program thrive on experiencing the world through their senses.

They possess an innate need to touch, feel, hold and carry everything and anything they see; the Toddler environment is prepared for this purpose. In this program, the children are exposed and guided with various exercises and materials to explore the indoor and outdoor environments.

Language

The Toddler program provides an enriched language environment. The children participate in activities to help them develop speaking and listening skills, and to expand their vocabulary.

Toddlers understand a great deal more than what they say because their receptive language is more developed than their expressive language.

The adults display strong language modelling at all times.

Social

Our Montessori Toddler program aims to provide the children with well-ordered and prepared learning environments in which they are respected, contributing members of a small community. A focus of this program is the "modelling" of appropriate grace and courtesy that the children see in adults. We see increased socialization as the children begin to interact with peers and adults through talking, taking turns and borrowing.

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Teachers focus on toileting, and this becomes a partnership between school and home when the child is ready.

Toddler students have a set nap time in the afternoon.

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Casa Children 3 to 6 years old (Preschool, JK/SK)

Named after Maria Montessori's first program in Rome, *Casa dei Bambini*, our Casa Program is geared toward the growth of the preschool child. It is based on the recognition that this is one of the most critical periods in a child's educational and emotional development.

Starting around age 3, children have the unique ability to absorb knowledge efficiently. The children explore the world and process information with their senses, which is why the hands-on Montessori materials of the classroom are so very important at this age. These materials are presented in a specific way to appeal to the child's strong sense of order, creating a foundation for their future learning.

Practical Life

Practical life activities continue to reflect daily life, which allows the child to further develop their skills with purposeful, meaningful work. Practical Life activities develop the child's concentration, voluntary control of attention, gross and fine motor skills and the ability to follow the steps required to complete a task. The practical life exercises fall into four main groups:

- Care of the environment
- Care of the self
- Control of movement
- Grace and courtesy/social relations

Sensorial

At this age (3-6 years), children use their senses to explore the environment, which they strive to classify in an ordered manner. The content of the Sensorial program includes:

- Auditory Discrimination
- Tactile Discrimination
- Visual Discrimination
- Stereognostic Exploration – feeling around an object to gain knowledge of it
- Olfactory and Gustatory – using taste and smell to identify and experience different types of foods etc.

Language

Birth to 6 years is a period of intense language acquisition.

Receptive and expressive language skills are nurtured by focusing first on the spoken word then progressing to writing, followed by reading and the exploration of grammar. This area builds upon the foundation of concentration, logical sequential thinking and motor control nurtured in the earlier Practical Life and Sensorial areas.

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Social

Opportunities for the awareness of one's needs and the needs of others are supported through the lessons of our Restitution Process, Grace and Courtesy and Peace Education. Children become profoundly aware of the importance of noticing and acknowledging the needs of others while also honouring their own needs through discussions, modelling behaviour, and dramatization of feelings, positive socialization and conflict resolution. In their final year of this plane of development (age 6), children have moved from "parallel play" to more collaborative interactions with their peers.

All Casa children must be toilet trained. There is no scheduled naptime, however children who are tired are able to lie down on a mat in the classroom.

We encourage all five-year-olds to attend full-day class in the third year of the Casa program.

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Elementary Program Children 6 to 12 years old (Grades 1-6)

Our Elementary Program is divided into Lower Elementary (ages 6-9) and Upper Elementary (ages 9-12).

Quite different from the preschool child, Elementary students' needs include a desire to explore, a focus on social skills, and the development of critical thinking.

Elementary students become fascinated with asking "how" and "why," which leads to greater independence and problem solving. Learning concepts remain concrete in Lower Elementary, but become more abstract as the child moves into Upper Elementary.

Practical Life

Practical Life in the Lower Elementary classroom exists as a culmination and refinement of the abilities developed in the preschool classroom. Care of self, care of the environment, grace and courtesy are all expectations at this level. Activities include food preparation, sewing, and arts and crafts that support research and Culture Studies.

Building on the Practical Life expectations from Lower Elementary, Practical Life skills continue to be emphasized in Upper Elementary through care of the self, care of the environment, and grace and courtesy, which take on a larger role when the students are off-site for activities during the school day and overnight.

Language

Lower Elementary children explore many aspects of language using concrete materials. Children continue to build upon the reading and writing skills they began in the Casa program. These cornerstones of language are critical at the Elementary level because language is the foundation upon which other studies are built.

The Upper Elementary Language program is designed to cultivate a keen sense of literacy in students and enable them to become effective communicators with efficient comprehension skills.

Math

Hands-on learning is still important at the Lower Elementary level; students continue to use concrete Montessori material as they develop their math skills and prepare to move from concrete to abstract mathematical concepts as they move into Upper Elementary.

In Upper Elementary, Math and Geometry are linked to cultural studies to show practical solutions to real-life problems. This approach helps to make the connection between the concrete and abstract.

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Social

Children in the Lower Elementary plane of development are moving from playing alongside their peers (“parallel play”) to having more interaction with them. There is a greater importance on these relationships and the morality involved in them. Children are very focused on the right and wrong of social order. The school uses a Restitution Process that has the children reflect on their actions, become responsible for their behaviour, the consequences of it and develop peaceful resolutions.

Children in Upper Elementary are highly focused on social skills and a sense of justice. Further independence and responsibility is developed through class meetings and opportunities for community service that lead to practising more-sophisticated leadership skills.

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Junior High Program Children 12 to 14 years old (Grades 7 & 8)

The Junior High program is designed to support students as they work towards the transition to high school and post-secondary education.

The program meets or exceeds the standards set out by the Ministry of Education for all curricular areas.

In Junior High, students become more familiar with traditional forms of academic assessment and lesson delivery. They review high school choices, career options and develop a more mature sense of self-confidence.

The stimulating and challenging curriculum focuses on leadership skills, and instills a sense of community engagement and social responsibility in our students.

Leadership

Our Junior High students are encouraged to be as independent as possible, as leaders within the school and wider community. They learn how to run group meetings, resolve conflicts, organize events and activities, and help others in need. They research current issues to develop individual points of view. They become confident in themselves and their capacity to work with and lead others. All of these experiences allow each student to develop to their potential and establish their own moral compass.

Academics

The Junior High program puts the students' learning skills to the test, broadening all areas of the curriculum from math and science, to languages, to music and the arts; it introduces education experts in a variety of subject areas. The language curriculum is delivered through literature studies and includes works from a variety of eras and styles. Students take on more independent study, research and writing.

Using an interdisciplinary approach for math, students explore concepts through a combination of text work, interactive questions, seminars, individual and group problem solving activities. History is called Humanities and encompasses all areas that help define what makes us human: history, literature, politics, political geography, and current events.

Social

As adolescents, interest in activity for the sake of activity dissipates as they become engrossed in a greater need for understanding and the development of their own identity. From a personal development standpoint, they are beginning to search for their place in the world. These young adults seek opportunities to collaborate, research, communicate, empathize, rationalize, and problem-solve.

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Quote: "The child who has never learned to work by himself, to set goals for his own acts, or to be the master of his own force of will is recognizable in the adult who lets others guide his will and feels a constant need for approval of others."

- Dr. Maria Montessori