

# AMS POSITION PAPER



## *KEY CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES*

The American Montessori Society desires to define Montessori education as it is practiced in AMS accredited schools, taught in AMS teacher education programs, and articulated in AMS sponsored publications, symposia and conferences.

### **The American Montessori Society is committed to promoting quality Montessori education for all children from birth to 18 years based on these key concepts:**

- The aim of Montessori education is to foster competent, responsible, adaptive citizens who are lifelong learners and problem solvers.
- Learning occurs in an inquiring, cooperative, nurturing atmosphere. Students increase their own knowledge through self- and teacher-initiated experiences.
- Learning takes place through the senses. Students learn by manipulating materials and interacting with others. These meaningful experiences are precursors to the abstract understanding of ideas.
- The individual is considered as a whole. The physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, spiritual, and cognitive needs and interests are inseparable and equally important.
- Respect and caring attitudes for oneself, others, the environment, and all life are necessary.

### **The Montessori teacher is educated in these areas:**

- Human growth and development.
- Observational skills to match students' developmental needs with materials and activities. This allows the teacher to guide students in creating their individual learning plan.
- An open-ended array of suggested learning materials and activities that empower teachers to design their own developmentally responsive, culturally relevant learning environment.
- Teaching strategies that support and facilitate the unique and total growth of each individual.
- Classroom leadership skills that foster a nurturing environment that is physically and psychologically supportive of learning.

### **A Montessori classroom must have these basic characteristics at all levels:**

- Teachers educated in the Montessori philosophy and methodology appropriate to the age level they are teaching, who have the ability and dedication to put the key concepts into practice.
- A partnership with the family. The family is considered an integral part of the individual's total development.
- A multi-aged, multi-graded, heterogeneous group of students.
- A diverse set of Montessori materials, activities, and experiences, which are designed to foster physical, intellectual, creative and social independence.
- A schedule that allows large blocks of uninterrupted time to problem solve, to see the interdisciplinary connections of knowledge, and to create new ideas.
- A classroom atmosphere that encourages social interaction for cooperative learning, peer teaching, and emotional development.

### **Suggested Readings:**

- Montessori in Contemporary American Culture. American Montessori Society. Heinemann Educational Books, 1991.
- John Chattin-McNichols. The Montessori Controversy. New York: Delmar Publishers, 1991.
- Montessori Life. A magazine published by the American Montessori Society.

The American Montessori Society (AMS) is a nonprofit education society founded in 1960 whose purpose is to help children develop their potential through the educational principles of Dr. Maria Montessori. This includes the following: developing Montessori programs, accrediting schools, granting credentials, encouraging research, organizing seminars and symposia, and promoting all other areas which relate to the dissemination of Montessori philosophy.

