

# GRAHAM HILL MONTESSORI PROGRAM

## Preschool/Kindergarten Syllabus

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### THE MONTESSORI CLASSROOM

The Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten classrooms are busy places. Essential components of the Montessori classroom are the Prepared Environment and the element of Choice. Teachers set up the environment within which children choose independently a variety of work.

We typically begin our days with a morning group, referred to as Group Time. This is followed by Work Time; when children choose work on their own, with a friend, or working a small group with a teacher. We usually have another group, before going out for recess. Preschoolers go home at this time and the Kindergartners from both classes join for the afternoon with Ms. Maureen.

During the afternoon, Kindergartners have lunch and recess, then a half hour at special classes. These include: Music, PE, and Library. We return to Room 6 for individual "kindergarten work time". Children are encouraged to begin with teacher directed work, then they may choose their own activities. We also take time for language and math lessons in small groups with the teacher. Throughout the year we build on readiness to read, write and appreciate literature together with chapter books, a poetry unit, etc.

Our classrooms are divided into areas of focus: Practical Life, Art, Sensorial, Language, Math, Cultural and Science. Within these areas, materials and skills are introduced, reintroduced and practiced during the time a child is in the 3-6 year old classroom. Each area of the classroom is integrated with the rest of the classroom. Skills learned from one area are extended to the other areas. Each child is guided individually to progress at his/her own developmental pace. Although we have varying expectations for each age, this syllabus presents a continuum so that the parent or new observer gains a fuller perspective of the 3-6 year old Montessori curriculum.

### PRACTICAL LIFE/ACTIVITIES FOR DAILY LIVING:

The purpose of the practical life material is to enable the children to acquire independence through control of their movements and knowledge of the functioning of their environment.

The main divisions of the practical life exercises are: Grace and Courtesy - activities such as greeting a visitor or carrying a tray; Care of Person - activities such as hand washing and the dressing frames; and Care of the Indoor Environment - activities such as spooning, pouring, sorting, folding cloths and polishing.

In the Practical Life area, children will:

- Learn to care for their own activities, classroom materials and each other.
- Develop a sense of order and sequence.
- Develop hand-eye coordination.
- Develop and refine the fine motor skills needed for writing.
- Develop a sense of self-confidence, independence and responsibility.
- Gain an ever increasing level of concentration.
- Learn to make choices appropriate to their learning level.

#### SENSORIAL AREA:

The sensorial material is designed to help the child train and refine his/her senses. The Pink Cubes, Brown Stairs, Color Tablets, Geometric Shapes, Sound Cylinders, Listening games and Music are some activities and materials in the Sensorial Area.

While working in this area children will:

- Gain an understanding of basic concepts within the environment: color, length, volume, width, weight, shapes, textures and smells.
- Begin to explore the base ten number system.
- Gain a concrete sense of geometry and geometric solids.
- Explore relationships between shapes and learn to create patterns.
- Develop critical thinking by using materials to compare and contrast, graduate from biggest to smallest, etc.

#### LANGUAGE AREA:

Reading and writing are an essential part of life in the classroom and as such are integrated throughout the curriculum. The Montessori approach to language is based on phonics and supported with a rich variety of reading and writing materials.

#### PRE-READING AND READING:

This area includes materials such as: Matching cards and games, sequencing materials, Sandpaper letters, Initial sound work, the Moveable Alphabet, books and books on tape.

Working in this area, children will:

- Build oral language through songs, poetry, finger plays, stories, etc.
- Learn to retell in sequence what they have heard.
- Learn to visually discriminate pictures, shapes, letter and words.
- Gain an appreciation for the written language and literature.
- Learn the direction of print. (Left to right; top to bottom)
- Read names, words and phrases by memory.
- Learn most letter sounds.
- Use multiple strategies to decode. (Phonics, pictures and context)

#### WRITING:

Over time, children's writing will develop along a continuum ranging from metal inset tracings, free hand drawing, scribble writing, random letters, inventive spelling leading to conventional spelling. Materials that encourage and refine writing include: the sandpaper letter, name tracing, the metal insets, alphabet tracing, push pin work, etc. Working in this area children can be expected to:

- Experiment with and draw pictures to convey thoughts.
- Use some conventions of writing, (top/bottom, left/right, mixed upper and lower case and spaces between words.)
- Children will copy names, words and phrases.
- Kindergartners will begin keeping records of their own work.

#### MATH AREA:

In Math, we take children's beginning understandings of number and help to organize and expand these ideas. We begin with the concrete and move to the abstract. Some of the materials we typically use in the math area are: the number rods, various counting games and activities, the bead cabinet and golden beads. Working in this area children will:

- Develop an understanding of quantity through one to one correspondence.
- Practice linear counting.
- Practice writing and recognizing numerals in random order.
- Explore sorting, estimating and graphing.
- Recognize and create increasingly difficult patterns.
- Explore the decimal system.
- Explore addition, subtraction and problem-solving.

## CULTURAL AND SCIENCE AREAS:

Materials used in the cultural area include: globes, land and water forms, puzzle maps, and classroom rules and jobs. In the science area, we use nature specimens, nature cards and National Science Foundation Kits to explore our world and begin to see and think like a scientist. Children will learn to:

- Gain an understanding of themselves and their role in the community of the classroom.
- Recognize and respect the differences and similarities among humans.
- Learn the differences between living and on-living.
- Learn to distinguish land and water forms.
- Learn the 7 continents and begin to explore the people and animals living therein.
- Begin to learn animal classifications, exploring habitats.
- Learn to observe carefully, noticing properties of plants and animals and materials.

## ART AREA:

A broad range of art experience will be present in the school day and throughout the school year. These include visual art, performing art, and music.

- Children will use a variety of art materials for tactile experience and exploration.
- Children will begin planning their own projects and work through the steps to complete them.
- Children will participate in group music and movement activities.

## GROUP TIME:

- Children will learn to listen respectfully to the adult or child speaking.
- Children will learn to speak in front of peers at appropriate times: sharing, answering and asking questions and adding to discussions.
- Children will learn to follow rules for simple structured games.