



***Lexington
Montessori
School***

***Parent
Education
Night***

***The 3 Year Cycle: Why is
it Important?***

What do you know about Montessori?

- ~planes of development
- ~absorbent mind
- ~normalization
- ~sensitive period
- ~adaptation
- ~independence

How do these Montessori concepts relate to the 3 year cycle?

Planes of Development

- Four distinct periods of growth, development and learning for children and youth:
 - 0-6
 - 6-12
 - 12-18
 - 18-24

During each plane humans have unique needs and characteristics.

Montessori's method was designed that at each plane maximum advantage was taken for the benefit of the child.

Absorbent Mind

- The mind able to absorb knowledge quickly and effortlessly.
- Montessori said from birth to age 6 was the absorbent mind period.

Children who stay in a Montessori classroom for the 3 year cycle are allowed the complete absorption of the environment.

Normalization

- Describes when children are able to focus and concentrate for extended periods of time and have a sense of satisfaction about their work.

Children completing the 3 year cycle have the benefit of completing full normalization in the classroom.

Sensitive Period

A special time in a child's life when he easily learns a particular skill if allowed time to practice.

- Children learn skills naturally and easier if allowed time to practice as much as needed during the particular period.

Completion of the 3 year cycle gives children the ability to fully exhaust each of their sensitive periods and receive maximum benefit from the Montessori environment.

Montessori's theory is now confirmed by scientists and even popular culture. Time magazine called it "Windows of Opportunity".

Sensitive Period Breakdown

- Unconscious acquisition of language: birth-3 years
- Conscious acquisition of language: 3 – 6 years old
- Order: 1-3 years old
- Sensory refinement: birth- 5 years old
- Interest in small objects: 18 months – 3 years old
- Social behavior: 2 ½ - 4 ½ years old
- Movement: birth- 4 years old
- Numbers: 4- 5 ½ years old
- Grace & Courtesy: 2 – 6 years old

Adaption

- The process where the young child uses the environment to develop, and in so doing, becomes part of the environment.
- The young child absorbs the culture of the time and place taking in every aspect of the environment and fitting it in his/her life.

As the child grows in the classroom his/her adaptations grow and change with maturity. Finishing the three year cycle provides the child maximum ability to achieve full benefit of this process.

Independence

- “Not depending on another”~ various shades of meaning~
- Throughout the planes of development child and young adults seek to become more independent.
- “Help me help myself”

As the child matures so does his/her need and ability to be independent. The 3 year cycle provides a gradual system for independence to come to a child naturally. Watching other children at different stages provides motivation for children.

Fitting it all together

- Each step of a child's development and learning from entry into the Montessori classroom serves as a solid foundation for the next.
- The child who does not finish the program will not experience the same benefits, joy and satisfaction of having reached an end.
- The third year in a Montessori classroom is when it all comes together. Reading skills come together and math skills advance. This is the time when leadership skills develop because the 3rd year students have the role of leaders in the classroom. Confidence is gained by having: **absorbed the environment, normalized into the classroom, had sensitive periods met, adapted and gained independence.**

Will my child collapse if not allowed to complete the 3 year cycle?

- OF COURSE NOT!
- The questions to ask yourself:
 1. “Why did I choose Montessori education for my child?”
 2. “What are my expectations of Montessori education?”
 3. “How can I assist my child in benefiting the most from the environment I have chosen for him/her?”
 4. “What about the money?”