

Is Montessori the Right Choice for Your Child?

- ❖ Underlying the Montessori curriculum are the fundamental beliefs that each child has an instinctive and spontaneous desire to learn and that self-motivation is necessary for learning. In the Montessori classroom, individual responsibility for behavior, along with respect for people and property, accompanies the freedom that students enjoy. In collaboration with observant teachers, who assist with goal-setting and ensure steady achievement, children move themselves toward learning. They learn at their own pace and pursue materials and topics that are of interest to them.
- ❖ To be successful, entering students must be able to learn to make choices, cooperate with peers, develop and maintain a sense of order, demonstrate self-discipline, function independently, and participate non-competitively in a classroom community. They must also find intrinsic satisfaction in work well done instead of seeking extrinsic rewards or pats on the back. Students with diverse learning styles—primarily auditory, visual, or kinesthetic—will find many stimulating and appropriate activities at LMS. Students who are highly distractible may find the environment too stimulating for their learning needs.
- ❖ Montessori education is different in many ways from other educational philosophies. Student success and parent comfort at Laramie Montessori will be greatly increased when parents are well informed and have a good understanding of the Montessori Method. Parents will be encouraged to attend parent education events, schedule visits to the classroom, and to facilitate coordination between home and school. These events may include workshops, guest speakers, school-wide and classroom parent meetings, curriculum sharing events, student-parent classroom events, and parent-student-teacher conferences. The school's newsletter and other publications will contain informative articles about school philosophy and programs. In addition, LMS will maintain a parent library of relevant books and other materials that will be available for parents to check out.

Laramie Montessori's educational program is based on the philosophy and methods developed 100 years ago by Dr. Maria Montessori. The basic principles of these theories are as follows:

- Every child begins life with an inner drive to explore and discover the world around her. This innate curiosity will lead to productive learning if given the proper environment, resources, and guidance.
- Academic, social, and emotional development are interdependent; education must center on the development of the whole child.
- Learning is most productive when it's self-directed and founded on individual interest.
- In younger children, learning is most effective when it takes place through direct sensory experiences and interaction with objects in their natural context.
- Cognitive development follows a predictable progression from the concrete to the abstract. There are specific moments when each child is most ready to develop and acquire certain skills. Educators must understand these levels and introduce material at appropriate times.
- Information should be presented in a pattern of whole-to-part, and integrated through interdisciplinary study, so students can place it in context and understand how things are related.
- Learning can be enhanced and applied, especially in later years, by going out into the community.

When these principles are pieced together, they form a foundation for motivated learning and high achievement, thus meeting LMS's mission to produce graduates who reach their full academic potential and are self-reliant, productive citizens.

The Montessori Difference

Pedagogy and learning materials are the most compelling difference between Laramie Montessori and other schools. Although the basic academic content of the curriculum is the same, the following elements are key to a Montessori classroom:

Distinctive Montessori materials
The prepared environment
Teacher's role
Individual learning contracts

Long, uninterrupted work periods
Interdisciplinary approach
Multi-age classrooms
Enhanced curriculum

Enrollment Information for Laramie Montessori School

The Laramie Montessori School (LMS) is a free, public Montessori charter school within Albany County School District #1. For the 2011/2012 school year, students will be enrolled for kindergarten through grade 4 for a total enrollment of 54 students. Enrollment is on a space-available basis and a lottery will be done if demand exceeds available openings.

The Montessori Method

LMS is a Montessori School based on the principles developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. In a Montessori classroom, at any age level, the children choose their work freely from the various integrated curriculum areas and work at their own pace. Materials present in a Montessori learning environment are self-correcting in nature; students are able to work with the materials and check the results of their work without adult intervention. The Montessori materials are tactile and are designed to teach from the concrete to the abstract. Each class day allows a three-hour uninterrupted work time. This allows the student to fully explore and experience all aspects of their work.

The Montessori teacher functions as a designer of the environment, resource person, role model, demonstrator, record keeper, and observer of each child's behavior and growth. The teacher acts as a facilitator of learning who integrates the teaching of all subjects, not as isolated disciplines, but as part of a whole intellectual tradition.

With the exception of the kindergarten room, LMS will have mixed age classrooms. Initially, the lower elementary classroom will consist of children aged 6-9 or children enrolled in the first, second, third and fourth grades. Eventually, the lower elementary will include only grades one through three and the upper elementary classroom will consist of children aged 9-11 or children in grades four to six.

Peace Curriculum and Conflict Resolution.

An integral part of learning for all age levels includes respectful communication and tolerance for all individuals in the community. All adults interacting with students will model appropriate methods for conflict resolution, guide individuals or groups of students to learn non-violent communication methods, and facilitate the understanding of peace as it relates to our world today.

Parent Education Meeting

All parents/guardians are encouraged to attend a parent education meeting about the Montessori philosophy. To accommodate as many families as possible, two meeting dates and times have been scheduled: Thursday March 29 at 6pm and Saturday April 2 at 10am, both meetings will be held at School District Special Services Building at 509 S. 9th Street.



**LARAMIE
MONTESSORI**

LOTTERY ENROLLMENT FORM 2011-12

Today's Date: ___/___/___

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student's Legal Name _____ Nickname _____

Date of Birth _____ Grade entering in Fall of 2011 _____ Gender (circle) M F

Name of current school (if applicable) _____

SIBLING INFORMATION

Name(s) and grade(s) of any sibling(s)

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Note: The lottery is done by "blind choice" and the following questions have no bearing on enrollment.

If your child is not enrolled for 2011/12, would you like him/her to remain on the waiting list? (circle) Y N

Has your child had experience in a Montessori classroom before? _____ If so, what age(s)? _____

Student's Ethnicity _____ (data used for grant application criteria)

Is your child currently on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan or does your child have any special needs? Yes No

If so, please describe _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Parent/Guardian #1 _____ Parent/Guardian #2 _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Work/ Daytime Phone _____ Evening _____ Mobile _____

Email Address _____

We encourage parents of all applicants to attend a parent education meeting to determine if Montessori is the right fit for your child. If unable to attend, meeting times are available by calling the number below.

I certify that the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Return to: LMS c/o LMCO, P.O. Box 2306, Laramie, WY 82073 (307) 721-9031

Montessori

1. Emphasis on cognitive structures and social development
2. Teacher's role is unobtrusive; child actively participates in learning
3. Environment and method encourage internal self-discipline
4. Individual and group instruction adapts to each student's learning style
5. Mixed age grouping
6. Children encouraged to teach, collaborate, and help each other
7. Child chooses own work from interests, abilities
8. Child formulates concepts from self-teaching materials
9. Child works as long as s/he wants on chosen project
10. Child sets own learning pace to internalize information
11. Child spots own errors through feedback from material
12. Learning is reinforced internally thru child's own repetition of activity, internal feelings of success repetition
13. Multi-sensory materials for physical exploration development
14. Organized program for learning care of self and self-care environment (shoe polishing, sink washing, etc.)
15. Child can work where s/he is comfortable, moves and talks at will (yet doesn't disturb others); group work is voluntary and negotiable

Traditional

1. Emphasis on rote knowledge and social development
2. Teacher's role is dominant, active; child is a passive participant
3. Teacher is primary enforcer of external discipline
4. Individual and group instruction conforms to the adult's teaching style
5. Same age grouping
6. Most teaching done by teacher and collaboration is discouraged
7. Curriculum structured with little regard for child's interests
8. Child is guided to concepts by teacher
9. Child usually given specific time for work
10. Instruction pace set by group norm or teacher
11. Errors corrected by teacher
12. Learning is reinforced externally by rewards, discouragements
13. Few materials for sensory, concrete manipulation
14. Little emphasis on instruction or classroom maintenance
15. Child assigned seat; encouraged to sit still and listen during group sessions

The Mission of Laramie Montessori School

Our mission is to support the development of the whole child through an authentic Montessori environment that honors the child's intrinsic motivation to learn and supports each individual's unique intellectual, physical, social and emotional development.

Goals

- To encourage self-directed learning, self-esteem, academic achievement, artistic expression, group collaboration and respect by upholding Montessori Principles in a thoughtfully-prepared and non-competitive environment.
- To conduct assessments that authentically demonstrate each student's intellectual, emotional, social and physical development.
- To develop healthy life habits that foster care of the self and care of the environment through meals, physical movement, and a quality school facility and surrounding natural environment. LMS believes that direct experience with the natural world helps foster a life-long connection to our environment.
- To build a community centered on the partnership of teachers, children and their families through parent education, parent involvement, school events, and service to the larger Laramie community.
- To build peace, foster personal growth, and develop life-long tolerance through a curriculum where students experience and learn to respect ethnic, cultural, economic and other differences and to seek and identify common ground.

Vision

- During the next five years, the founders of Laramie Montessori School envision an integrated community of Montessori teachers, parents, and students who work to fulfill the mission statement and the goals. We envision children who mature into confident, capable, and content adults who feel inspired to better our world through the expression of their gifts and talents which were nurtured during the course of their Montessori education.