



Enrichment Curriculum

Our enrichment curriculum provides a continuation of the Montessori philosophy of mutual respect, independence and cooperation that the children are accustomed to in the classroom.

STUDIO ART

Children in the primary art classes are involved in gaining technical skills, learning to control a variety of media, and using visual symbols. They view art from many places and times and come to see that art plays a valued role in creating cultures and building civilizations. Lower elementary students are introduced to the stories of famous artists and view their masterpieces to learn about the elements and principles of art. They then apply what they have learned to their own work. They study and apply color, pattern, texture, line, and form. They draw with pencil, charcoal, pastels, crayons, and markers, and they learn to paint with watercolor, tempera, and acrylic paints. The children also experiment with printmaking, ceramics, collage and sculpture. Perhaps most importantly, they begin to experience the joy and satisfaction found in the creative endeavor.

In elementary art classes, students continue this hands-on exploration while they expand and refine their skills with media, techniques, and artistic processes. At this age they begin to create works of art that deal with ideas of personal significance. Upper elementary students continue to look at specific works of art for subject matter, themes, symbols, meaning, and purpose.

MUSIC

Children in primary music classes sing, dance, and play percussion instruments and recorders. They improvise melodies, rhythms and creative movement and practice reading and writing standard music notation. Working primarily with pentatonic melodies and basic rhythm patterns, they build a working vocabulary of solfege (do, re, mi, etc.) and rhythm language which they use in a conversational manner to create their own music. As they encounter familiar musical elements in classical music, they add to their knowledge of music and musicians in other times and places by studying the stories of the composers. As they sing or play instruments in ensembles, children build their skill and understanding of music conventions such as how to rehearse, critique, begin and end a performance.

In elementary music classes, children continue singing, dancing, playing percussion instruments and playing recorders as they perform increasingly complex music. They extend their musical vocabularies to include diatonic scales and modes, syncopated rhythms, compound meters and functional harmony. Their classroom study of history prompts experience with music from other times and places, whether singing songs, listening to significant recordings, learning historic social dances or studying the instruments of a particular style period or culture. Continued ensemble work allows them to refine their improvisation, composition, rehearsal and performance skills.

MOVEMENT

In the primary class, we practice 'natural gymnastic movements'. The encouragement of these movements lead to essential exercises such as balance, standing with good posture; walking and developing endurance in walking; running, jumping, moving and lifting weights.

In the elementary class, the children learn the importance of fun, teamwork, sportsmanship, following rules, safety, and proper technique. Classes develop gross and fine motor skills, stamina, flexibility, hand-eye coordination, and basic skills such as dribbling a basketball, controlling a soccer ball, or the rudiments of baseball.

SPANISH

In the primary classes, Maria Montessori's term "sowing the seeds of interest" could well be used to describe the overall goal for the primary Spanish language program. This means creating enjoyment, awareness, and an eagerness to learn more. The primary program focuses on developing listening and speaking skills. Early exposure to other languages creates a facility for understanding and speaking, as well as greater ease in later study. It also creates an early consciousness of culture - the richness of our many ways of being human.

In the elementary Spanish language classes the program continues the listening and speaking sequence established at the primary level. In addition, it strives to incorporate reading and writing skills. By the end of the lower elementary experience, the vocabulary that has been introduced expands into more thematic units such as how we are unique, animals, the world around us, etc.

MODERN TECHNOLOGY

The Montessori philosophy advocates that the classroom be a reflection of the home, the community, and the world. Now, a century after Maria Montessori founded her Casa dei Bambini, the world is becoming a high technology society, with computers a part of everyday American lives. Computers are almost a household necessity, and basic word-processing programs are now easier for young children to use. We feel that it is important that we implement the use of technology in our enrichment program through computers, digital cameras and digital art programs.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Godly Play® is an imaginative approach to Christian Education developed by Jerome Berryman. It is what he calls "his interpretation of Montessori religious education". He feels that children have experienced the presence of God, but lack the language to express this to others. In the Godly Play® enrichment class, the students will have entered a sacred space in which they can feel safe and free to respond as they are surrounded by parables, sacred stories and liturgical action stories. Over a period of weeks, the director will present each of these stories using wooden figures and materials that allow them to hear and see the old stories in a new way. During the class time, the children hear the story, respond by wondering and using art response materials, and then participate in "the feast" which is their communion experience.