Alive
Montessori & Private School

We make learning come *Alive*!

Our Curriculum is designed to bring out the best in every child.
Better education - Better job - Better life.

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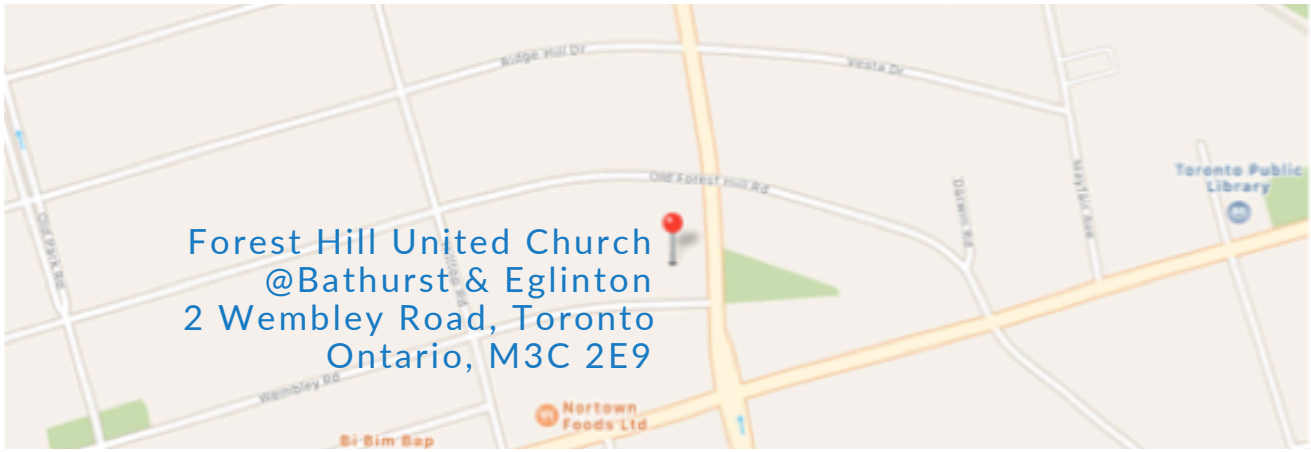

Conveniently located in beautiful Forest Hill, at Bathurst & Eglinton in Toronto, we are a non-religious school dedicated to providing a safe, caring, home-like environment. A place where children have fun while learning so they can excel in their later education and in life.

Alive
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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Alive Montessori & Private School.
We are very happy to be in our new location at 2 Wembley Road. Our existing students will appreciate the improvement in the space. To our new students and parents, we know that our school environment will be very different from anything you have experienced before. What other school do you know where students don't want to leave when it's time to go home?
We provide an interesting and exciting environment to stimulate the child's natural desire to learn. Our preschool and kindergarten children are taught using the Montessori method and are expected to be able to read by the time they enter Grade 1. Our elementary children are taught using the Enriched Ontario Curriculum as a guideline; to this, we add many other activities and areas of knowledge to interest and challenge the students.
Our goal at Alive Montessori & Private School is to give our students an excellent education that becomes the foundation leading to a better job and a better life.
To give our children the best chance to succeed, we enclose this information booklet for parents gives you guidelines we have found from experience lead to the best results. We are always open to hearing from you if you have any questions about your child's education.

Sincerely yours,

Julia Simon
(Owner)

WE ARE MORE THAN A SCHOOL- WE ARE FAMILY!

Some of Our References:

"Absolutely fantastic preschool where the teachers are not only trained in Montessori pedagogy, but show delight, affection and sincere care for the children. Our daughter has loved this school and thrived there! We love the extent of arts, music, dance and language incorporated into the class day. A secret GEM of a school." [NR]

"We are so blessed to have met you! Thank you for welcoming us to your school and family and helping with our move to Canada. Max has grown so much in his time at Alive and we know this has been a wonderful foundation for his future." [OM]

“At the beginning of the school year [my child] was enrolled in a TCDSB just as I was when I was growing up. Within the first month of September we found out that [she] was struggling with anxiety. After long coaching sessions with teachers and doctors, I decided to enroll her into Alive Montessori School. THANKFULLY I can say that [she] has been enrolled in this school since January and has done a complete turn around. ... She’s learned so much within the first month of being there and has a different outlook on school altogether. Alive Montessori has done a tremendous job helping me work with [her] to cope with her anxiety. ...what they teach our children at such a young age is incredible to see.”[JR]

"My son went here the summer of 2020 during the world wide pandemic of Covid-19. The care taken with my child was confidence building and never felt unsafe. This was the first time since March break that my son had finally gotten a chance to be a kid again, and they provided that with flying colors (some times actually) really this time for him was so important and they knocked it out of the park. ...I could not be happier as a parent to see my child actually get to be a kid again amongst these times. Thank you Alive for providing my kid with the childhood memories I dream of!" [AS]

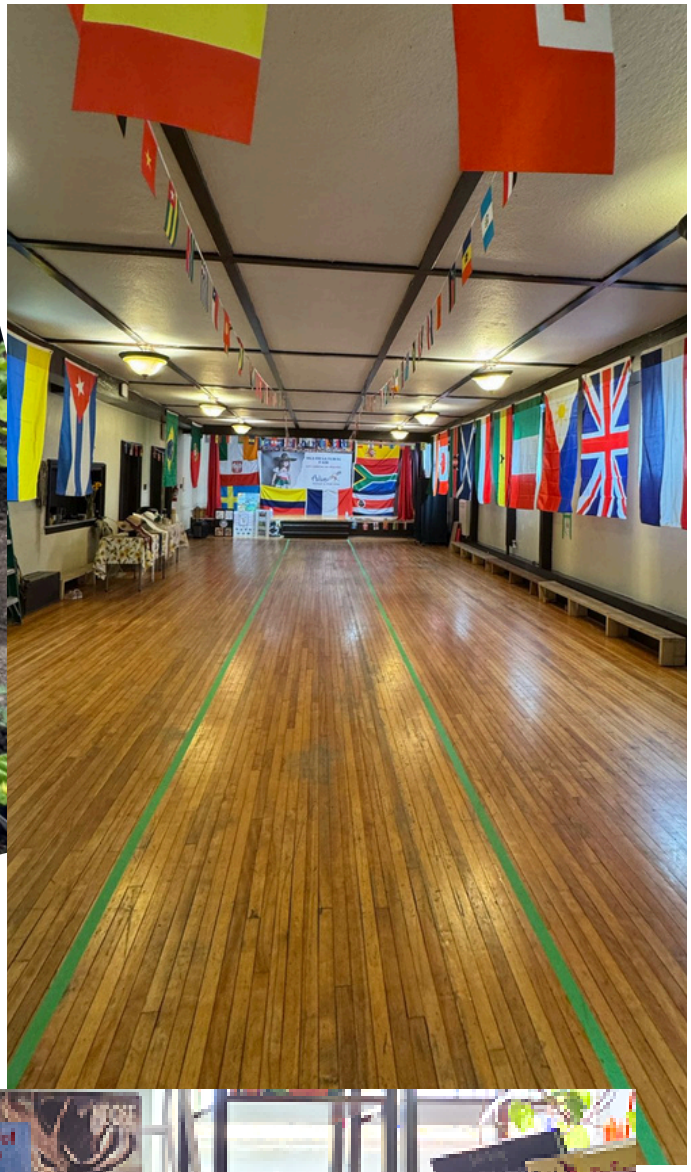
“Before my son started going to Alive he didn't like school; he hated to write and didn't like math very much. He had started not caring much anymore. Julia got him back excited about life and now he loves to write and is a year ahead in all subjects.” [A.W.]

“Ms. Julia is no ordinary teacher. She stands out because she genuinely loves children ... I wish every school could be like Ms. Julia’s school; our world would be better for it.” [H.W.]

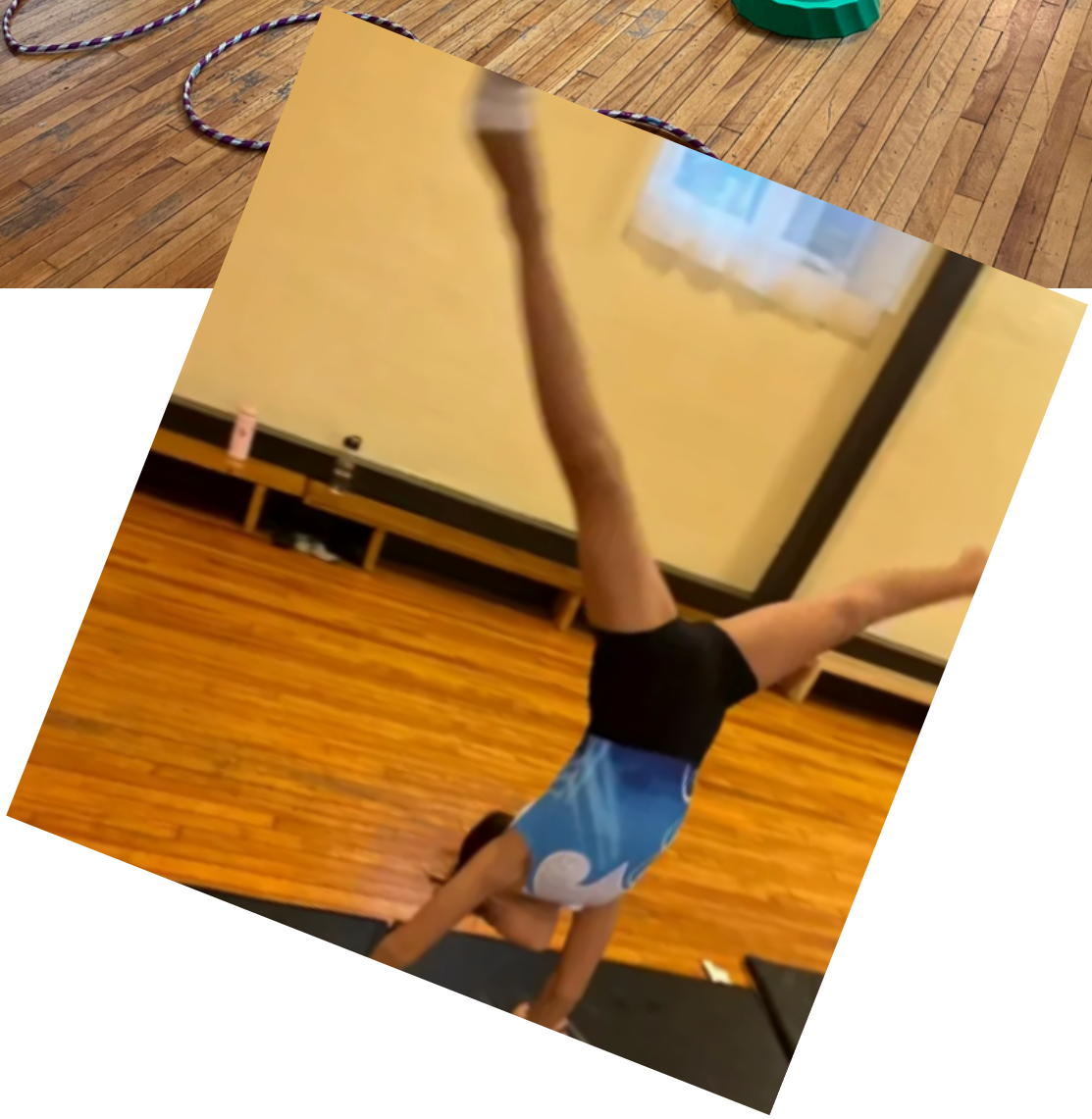
“Our son spent the past year at Alive Montessori. He is 4.5 years old; however, as a result of the exceptional level of attention shown by Julia Simon, his ability to do simple math, reading, writing are beyond our expectations .... There is a level of care and attention that is shown to the children that you simply do not see in other schools.” [J.B]

“I love the experience at Alive Montessori school. My daughter is doing so well. She gets the benefit of a safe environment for which I am truly grateful.” [C.W.]

OUR FACILITIES



Animals in Fall
The Thunderbird Pumpkin
apples and pumpkins
Fletcher and the Falling Leaves
Roald Dahl
Fantastic Recipes



WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER ALIVE MONTESSORI & PRIVATE SCHOOL FOR MY CHILD?

All of our parents have compelling reasons to send their children to our school. Some of the more common are as follows:

- “The standards of the public school system are too low”
- “There are too many kids in the classroom and my child is not receiving enough individual attention”
- “I don’t feel that the school is safe for my child”
- “He is behind in his reading, and his writing is atrocious”
- “We’ve had behavior problems ever since he started going to school”
- “She doesn’t do well in large classrooms”
- “She already knows what they are teaching and is bored”
- “My child is getting bullied by other kids”
- “There is not enough discipline in the school”
- “I’m being told he has Learning Disability”
- “The school doesn’t seem to care”
- “They want to put him on drugs”
- “Some of the other children are having a bad effect on my son”
- “My daughter is not learning anything in Kindergarten”
- “I don’t know what’s wrong, but my child hates to go to school”

The common thread for all these parents is that they care deeply about their child’s future success.

A poor education will limit your child’s potential for success, but they will reap the rewards of a proper education for a lifetime.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU AND YOUR CHILD

You are making a big commitment to your child's future when you choose Alive Montessori & Private School. The very best gift a parent can give their child is a good education. Skills and abilities learned in school largely determine the success your child will have throughout their life. The first few years of schooling are vital, as they establish the foundation for all subsequent learning. It is here that they will learn to read and write and where they begin to get familiar with mathematical concepts; skills that they need to have for all future learning. Correcting a poor start in schooling is made much more difficult because the child's ability, confidence and attitude toward learning, whether positive or negative, are largely set in these early years.

We set very high standards for our teachers and for our students. We expect all of our children to begin reading at age 4 and to be fluent readers by age 6 or 7, well before the expected goals in the public schools.

We are placing your trust in us to give your child the very best education possible. At Alive Montessori, we will treat your child as an individual and give everyone personal attention. We will do our very best to keep them engaged and interested in learning by making it fun and related to the real world. We teach life skills, work ethic, mental and physical discipline, manners, and how to work as a team and care for others.

We consider ourselves to be partners in the future success of your child, we listen and work with you, on forwarding the best interests of your child.

As Mark Twain so aptly put it, "Don't let schooling get in the way of your education." We want your child to receive a *real* education – one that will give them the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve success in a career and in life.

JULIA SIMON, OWNER/PRINCIPAL

Julia Simon was born in Hungary, Europe. She was influenced at an early age, by parents who were both professional educators, and her interest in education was cultivated as a young child. Her father was a college professor at an esteemed College. Her mother was an elementary and middle school teacher, who later became the principal of a large inner-city elementary school. By focusing on art and art education, she was able to positively engage disadvantaged children and youth under her care, and help alleviate some of the socioeconomic disadvantages that plagued inner city neighbourhoods.

Julia's early interests included athletics (she was an accomplished gymnast and swimmer), dance, art, music, literature and, of course, teaching. She graduated with an Elementary School Teachers Diploma, and later earned additional Qualifications as a Librarian, and Swimming Instructor.

During her tenure as a teacher in Hungary, she came to resent heavy state control over education in the 1980s in eastern Europe, and the lack of intellectual freedom prompted her to seek a new life in Canada.

Having to learn a completely new language, Julia gained a unique perspective on the difficulties in learning how to read and write English. With her own experience as a backdrop, she vowed to find and use the best methods for teaching children how to read and write.

Julia earned her Early Childhood Education Diploma in Toronto in 1990. As an experienced early childhood educator, she recognized the potential benefits of the Montessori method of teaching. She earned her Montessori Pre-School Diploma in 1995. In 2001, she started her first Montessori preschool in Toronto. Two years later, due to high demand, she added an Elementary school program.

In 2011, she founded Alive Montessori & Private School, which now operates at 2 Wembley Road. By making learning fun, and by emphasizing the importance of learning fundamentals, our students excel in their education and establish a strong foundation for their future careers.

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MISSION STATEMENT

At Alive Montessori & Private School our mission is based on the following premises:

- The word “educate” comes from Latin roots meaning “to lead out”. As such, we believe that it is our duty as educators to bring out the innate skills and talents of the children in our charge.
- Every child is a unique individual deserving of the best education possible.
- Every child has an innate desire to learn that must be cultivated, not blunted.
- Every child has his or her natural interests and strengths.
- Learning occurs at varying rates and every child learns at his or her own optimum pace.
- The Basics of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic are vitally important as these still form the foundation for all future learning.
- The goal of education is to give every child the tools he or she will need to become self-reliant and successful in life.
- Education does not have to be a dreary and dull activity. Done properly, learning is fun.

Our goal at Alive Montessori & Private School is to provide the best possible start to our children through proper education, thereby instilling a life-long love of learning in every child. We aim to create a safe, caring and fun environment where every child will learn and will become more and more confident as he or she gains in abilities.

WHAT IS THE MONTESSORI METHOD?

Maria Montessori was born in Italy in 1870 and continued her work in education up until her death in 1952. Ahead of her time, she was the first woman in Italian history to earn a medical doctor's degree. After practicing medicine for only a few years, she embarked on the career path for which she would become famous – as an enlightened educator for young children. She was convinced that the conventional methodology of schooling left much to be desired and developed her own system to enable children to learn. This involved creating a carefully structured and stimulating environment where children are exposed to many materials and activities from which they learn. Most parents are amazed when they first see the richness of materials in a Montessori classroom; it is certainly different from the typical classroom in our public schools.

Maria Montessori designed her materials along "sensorial" lines to allow the children to discover, learn and develop using all their senses. Sandpaper letters and numbers, geometric shapes to manipulate and compare, wooden blocks and beads for adding and multiplying, and so much more all contribute to the child's understanding of the world around him.

Dr. Montessori consistently taught reading and writing to children between the ages of four and six, well below the expected norm in our public school system. In fact, she was of the firm belief that this was the best time to do so. She believed that children must re-create whatever it is that they are learning in order to understand it, and for this reason, she taught these vital skills in the reverse order from our usual educational standard – writing, and then reading.

From a humble start in a single room teaching poor children using her educational ideas, the Montessori method of education has spread throughout much of the world for the simple reason that it works. As a parent, there is no better gift you can give your child than a solid education that gives him or her the skills and confidence to be a success in his life.

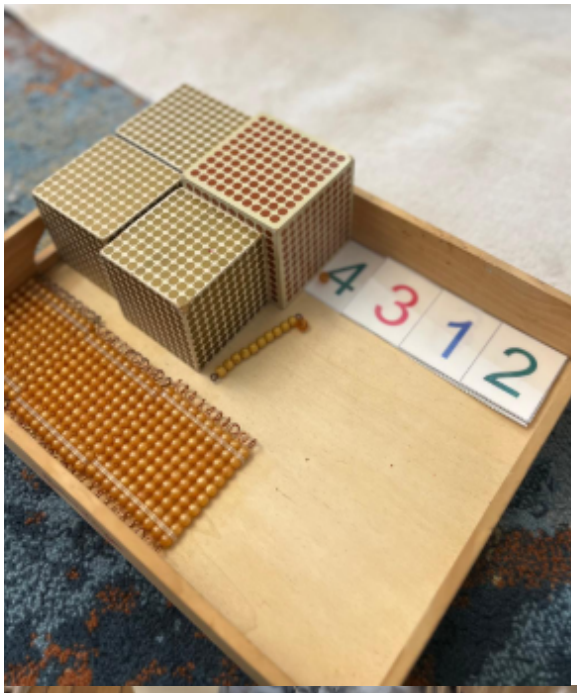
Julia Simon, the principal of the Alive School is a certified Montessori pre-school teacher (Maria Montessori preferred the term "directress", as this more accurately described the function – to direct the children to discover and learn on their own).

READING, WRITING AND MATH STARTS EARLY

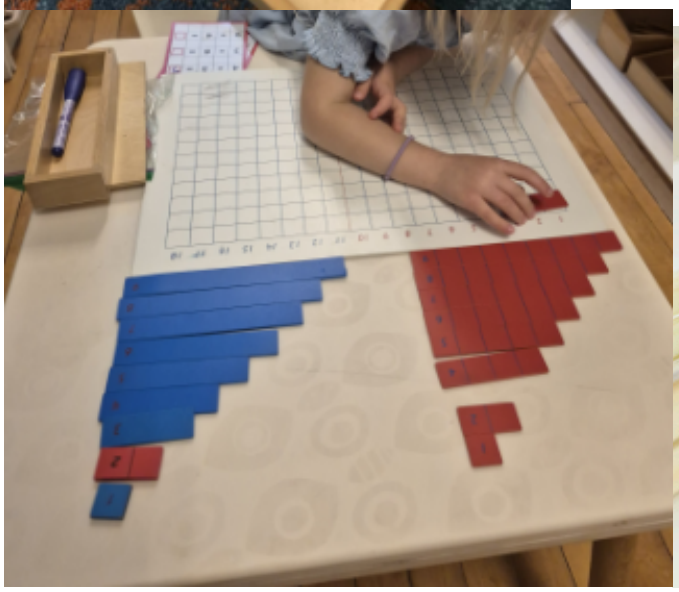
If your child enters school unable to read, they may never become a fluent reader. There is nothing inherently wrong with a child who can't read by age 6, but the subject of teaching reading is generally poorly understood, and often poorly taught, in large classrooms, where a child generally does not receive the individual attention they need. Failure in the early stages can lead to all sorts of negative outcomes that make it much more difficult to re-engage the child as they get older.

Maria Montessori believed that the best time to teach a child how to read was between the ages of 4 and 6 – well below the expected norm of 7 or 8 today. She developed and adopted methods and materials to this end and discovered that the process was much faster and more thorough when children learn to read by writing first. In other words, they are re-creating the material for themselves and making it their own. Children are allowed to go through an "invented spelling" stage as they develop their own awareness of the relationship between the spoken sounds and the written letters. Maria Montessori wrote, "Contrary to the usually accepted idea, writing precedes reading." The famous Swiss educator Jean Piaget explains the reason; "In order for a child to understand something, he must construct it himself, he must re-invent it."*
Maria Montessori herself taught children to read and write between the ages of four and six, and considered this the best age to do so. Using a logical, step-by-step approach, we see no reason for any child to fail to learn to read well. It is a skill all children must master to succeed in today's world.

Early reading and writing are but two aspects of our Montessori program, albeit very important ones. These skills form the basis for all subsequent learning – even math has its word problems. Dr. Montessori developed what she called a "sensorial" approach to teaching children. They were not expected to sit quietly at desks for hours at a time, but were given the freedom to explore in an enriched learning environment. All the senses were involved in hands-on learning. For example, tools used in a Montessori classroom to teach reading include sandpaper letters and numbers so a child is able to get tactile feedback in tracing their shapes. Letters made of wood, fabric and other material give the child different options to keep their interest. Lots of material is provided to enable a child to write. The reading material is carefully selected to ensure the child builds confidence by achievement.



The Montessori math program follows the same approach and is designed with lots of material for the children to handle to develop their sense of numbers, of size, of proportions, of quantity, of shape, and of the basic math operations of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Beads and wooden blocks are used so a child fully understands the concepts of numbers and the decimal system, as well as the basics of the fundamental arithmetic operations of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Metal and wood “pie” sections teach the concept of fractions. A simple abacus is used to develop their concept of calculation. And the children are given plenty of practice so they can master this vital subject.



Other material you will find in our Montessori classroom include large maps and map puzzles; jigsaw puzzles of varying levels; colour blocks to develop a child’s sense and knowledge of colour; scent bottles for identifying odours; games to improve motor and intellectual skills; different fasteners to teach children how to tie shoes, button shirts, fasten buckles; animal models to expose them to the natural world; and much more.

THE MONTESSORI EARLY EDUCATION CURRICULUM (CASA - AGES 2.5 TO 6 YEARS OLD)

The Montessori Curriculum for children between the ages of 2.5 and 6 years is based on the following five areas of learning: 1.Personal Independence and Care of the Environment; 2.Education of the Senses; 3.Language; 4.Math; 5.Cultural Studies.

In the Montessori system, children are placed in age groups spanning three years (e.g. 3, 4 and 5- year-olds work together). The younger children are inspired and encouraged by example and the older ones can help teach the younger ones. The full curriculum is designed to be completed over a 3-year period.

1. Personal Independence and Care of the Environment (Practical Life Exercises)

Children have an innate desire to become independent and take care of their own personal needs and to gain the skills to help others. The Montessori curriculum supports this inner drive by providing an environment and the necessary materials to support the path to independence. Exercises in personal hygiene, dressing, care of self are all an integral part of the early childhood Montessori classroom. Activities to support the many skills young children need to accomplish on the way towards independence are all taught as specific lessons, with their own set of materials e. g. dressing frames, hand-washing exercises etc.

In order to work independently in a mixed age group, children are taught the rules of the classroom and how to move and work successfully within it. For example - how to handle the Montessori materials, tyding away work, taking care of books, using floor mats, looking after classroom pets and plants, and preparing snacks & meals.

These skills are all taught as separate exercises that are designed to give children the freedom and confidence they need in order to work at their own individual pace in the classroom. Exercises in grace and courtesy are presented daily during circle time and in small informal group lessons. The children learn how to behave in certain situations and acquire the social skills essential for every day living in society. They develop a sense of personal dignity, an understanding of their own culture and an awareness and respect for people of all ages and traditions. Early conflict resolution skills are taught and attention is given to making good choices.

Exercises are designed to teach the child how to do a variety of things, including how to ask for something, introduce oneself, wait one's turn, offer help to others, make eye contact, apologize, welcome visitors, work cooperatively, offer refreshments, walk with a partner, behave at the table, behave in public places, and shake hands. Through the social interaction involved in carrying out these exercises, the children develop the ability to work harmoniously in a carefully prepared environment.

Exercises for the development of fine and gross motor skills are carefully developed as part of the practical life curriculum. These activities include rolling mats, pouring liquids, threading, sweeping, carrying chairs, walking carefully, carrying materials to a work and using utensils.

These activities develop dexterity and coordination and are closely linked to other areas of the curriculum.

The practical life component of a Montessori early childhood curriculum is the underlying foundation for success in the other four areas of the curriculum. Each task allows the child to gain independence, and to develop a sense of order, concentration, responsibility and coordination of movement. Children gain enormous freedom and confidence to work successfully both independently and cooperatively. The future success of the elementary Montessori environment is based on this core foundation of learning skills.

2. Education of the Senses (Sensorial materials)

The Montessori sensorial curriculum allows the child to discriminate and order the impressions that have entered through each of their senses. Scientifically designed materials that isolate each sense help develop the child's intellect through hands-on exploration.
The child learns to separate and classify forms, colours, textures, tastes and smells. Exercises in this area refine the senses and develop skills in thinking, judging, concentrating, comparing and sequencing. The materials offer unlimited opportunities for the development of vocabulary and the essential development of dexterity that will lead to writing and reading.

The sensorial curriculum is divided into the following areas:

❏ Visual Sense: Children learn to discriminate by size, length, dimension, colour, similarity, difference.

❏ Tactile Sense: Children learn to by touch. They match sandpaper and fabric of varying textures according to their similarities. They order material from rough to smooth and learn to contrast and compare.

❏ Auditory Sense: Children continue the process of matching, ordering, contrasting and comparing, using various sounds, musical bells, instruments.

❏ Complex Senses (weight, heat, shape, smell, taste): Children explore all of the above qualities by using carefully designed materials and exercises which sharpen their senses at a time when they have a particular developmental interest in this work (sensitive period).

The sensorial exercises are designed to prepare the child for more complex learning in language, Math and Cultural Studies.

3. Language curriculum

Language in the Montessori early childhood curriculum focuses on the following areas:
Oral Language - Listening and Speaking and **Written Language -** Reading and Writing.

The curriculum is designed to meet the young child's innate need to acquire language. Significant emphasis is placed on building vocabulary and oral competency. Through the use of the Montessori materials, children acquire a rich vocabulary for labeling, describing, comparing and contrasting their environment and the people in it. Precise terminology is used. Discussion is encouraged, and the children are given the appropriate language to engage in a meaningful exchange as they get on with their work. Small group and circle activities are organized on a daily basis. These are opportunities for the children to enjoy a wide variety of language activities that are carefully designed to enrich their oral expression and strengthen their listening skills. In essence, language enrichment is embedded in the Montessori curriculum and is a central point of focus when the teacher is giving a lesson in any of the other curriculum areas.

Written language is introduced to children at about 4 years of age. Skills are taught separately by careful use of specially designed materials that teach pencil control, letter formation, sound/letter recognition, phonetic blending, word/picture matching, and sentence construction.

4. Math

The Montessori early childhood math curriculum is firmly based on learning through experience. Children use a wide variety of carefully constructed materials to lead them to an understanding of the value and sequence of numbers 1 to 10. From there they are introduced to larger amounts and learn the concept of making groups of tens, hundreds, thousands (the decimal system). Number notation and place value are taught as the child develops an understanding of number concepts. Children are introduced to the basic operations of addition, multiplication, subtraction and division at a concrete level so that they gain a real concept of what these concepts really mean.

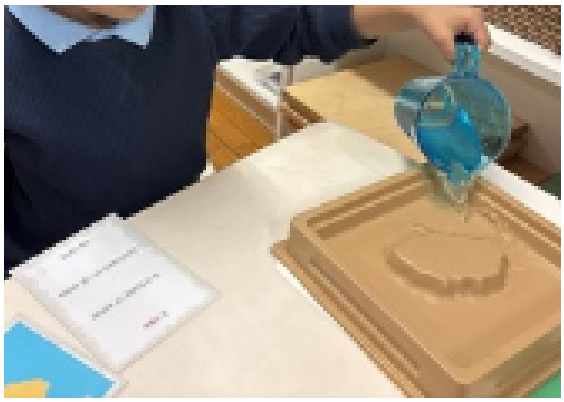
Geometry is introduced in the early childhood program through the use of materials which are classified according to qualities e.g. “these shapes have three sides, they are called triangles,” “the four sides on these shapes are all the same size, they are called squares.” The child learns to discriminate, classify and name circles, squares, rectangles and polygons, always using materials to guide them.

On completion of the early childhood curriculum, the child will demonstrate through the use of materials, an understanding of the following:

- ❑ Number value, sequence, and symbols from 1 to 1,000
- ❑ The four basic math operations
- ❑ Odd and even numbers
- ❑ Skip counting (early preparation for memorization of number facts)
- ❑ Reading and recording numbers for all of the above activities.

The program has the advantage of being able to meet each child’s individual learning style and pace of development. Children who are not ready to complete the early childhood curriculum by the end of this cycle will continue the work at the elementary level where there are special linkage materials to bring about the understanding.

5. Cultural Studies



The Montessori early childhood cultural program is based on an integrated study of science, the social sciences and the arts. Children are exposed to a rich, stimulating variety of activities based on hands on learning. In keeping with the Montessori philosophy of education, the children first experience general rules of the universe (e.g. the division of land and water). These are gradually broken down into smaller parts (e.g. continents/oceans, countries, provinces/states, cities, etc.)

Stories of animals and children from other lands help the children to understand fundamental needs and how these are influenced by climate, environment and lifestyle. Cultural differences and similarities are explored through music, dance, costume and food. Festivals and traditions such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Chinese New Year, Diwali, St. Patrick's Day are celebrated through the arts, stories, geography. Working with cultural materials helps the children become aware that they are part of the large family of humanity.

Simple science experiments that demonstrate the qualities of matter: magnetic/non-magnetic; solid/liquid; living/non-living are made by the children as part of the study of their environment.

Weather observations and experiments help them to appreciate the variety of clothing, homes, food that exist to meet people's needs.

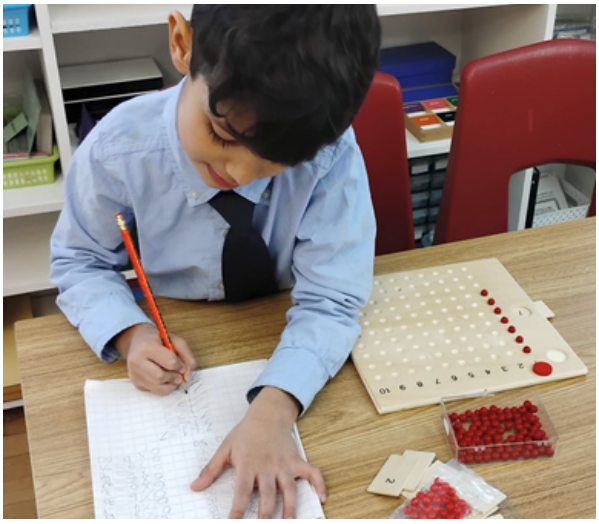
Materials are available to help the children label, compare and classify the parts of plants and animals. Particular emphasis is placed on having plants and pets in the classroom and around the school. The children learn how to take care of these so that they thrive. They undertake experiments to discover the needs of plants and seeds.

An understanding of the passage of time is developed through the use of the clock, the calendar and personal time lines. This lays the foundation for an understanding of history in the elementary years.

Art, Music, Drama and other Extracuriculars:

Art, music, storytelling are all explored through a variety of media and structured programs. Children are encouraged to incorporate an activity from these streams as part of their cultural project work. We also supplement the Montessori curriculum with gym, gymnastics, music, French, dance & yoga, in order to offer a holistic learning and growing opportunity. In short, the Montessori method of education introduces children to a wide variety of subjects in an integrated and interesting way. The information obtained by the child through practical activities is retained and forms a solid base for learning through the elementary years and beyond.

ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM GRADE 1 TO 6



The Alive Montessori lower elementary school program is based on the Ontario public school curriculum – ***with a difference.***

We place heavy emphasis on the basics of reading, writing and math to ensure that each child has a sound foundation on which to build their education. All other learning becomes simpler and more rewarding if these Basics are mastered. Our first priority with any new student is to bring these skills up to speed before moving onto other learning.

Unique to our approach is that we use "checksheets" outlining the materials to be covered and the skills to be mastered. The student is expected to fully understand each step before moving on to the next item. This way, the student progresses at his or her own optimum rate. This moves away from the one-size-fits-all approach and allows us to provide the individual attention lacking in many schools. It acknowledges the fact that learning does not occur in a smooth, linear progression, but happens in spurts. By using this unique teaching method, the slower student is not overwhelmed with things they are not ready for, and the fast student is not held back and allowed to become bored.

Another unique aspect of our approach is that we teach our elementary students HOW to study. This is a skill that is almost never taught. Yet in this rapidly changing world, it is vital that our students learn how to accumulate new knowledge and develop new skills quickly, thoroughly and effectively.

The typical modern classroom has become uninspiring, dull and boring. Most students will tune out if they cannot see how they can apply what they are supposed to be learning to their lives. It is necessary to find hands-on activities that will engage the students and we make sure that these are provided at our school. Our classrooms are lively, fun places with lots of activities to keep students interested. We explore our community and attend a variety of outdoor and indoor activities including Theater, galleries, parks, skating, the Library, and outdoor classroom settings such as High Park Nature Centre and Kortright Conservation Centre.

We take the Ontario curriculum as a guide, and enhance it in many different ways. By taking the child's interests into account, we keep them excited and engaged in the learning process. In true Montessori fashion, we will not inundate your child with homework. We don't expect parents to do our job; we expect the child to be disciplined and work hard to get their work done at school.

We encourage parents to engage in lots of reading at home, and to limit the amount of ‘screen time” for their children. Too much screen time has a detrimental effect on the concentration and ability of students to learn. In many cases, it can even affect behavior negatively. However, the reverse is also true; when the children are achieving successes and gaining new skills with a proper education, we often find that they become less interested in these largely time-wasting activities. Even the youngest children are looking to broaden their horizons and challenge themselves with reading and other learning activities.

EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMMING

At Alive Montessori and Private School we believe in a holistic approach combining scholastics and extra curricular activities. We aim to offer a balanced program that incorporates not only classroom work, but also the opportunity to foster skills and development through physical education, music, Coding classes, Chess club, French language studies, art classes, dramatic arts, public speaking, dance classes, piano classes, and culinary arts. The children will have the opportunity to showcase their talents at our Winter and Spring concerts, where families gather to bear witness to the amazing things our children can do!

COOKING, THE ARTS, STEM

PLAY NIGHT, VISUAL ARTS, OUTDOOR LEARNING

WHERE LEARNING COMES ALIVE!