

Using the Guides with Ages 6 to 12

Like the primary classroom, the elementary classroom is multi-age. In the primary classroom each child is allowed to progress at his or her own pace, being neither pushed ahead nor held back. Many children in the primary classroom will be working with some of the elementary material. So there is an overlap in the levels of work done in the primary and elementary classrooms.

The Montessori cosmic theme is cyclical rather than linear. Each year is a step upward in a spiral of learning as the child explores each study at his or her own level and pace. Because ages 6 to 9 and 9 to 12 remain in the classroom with the same group of peers for three years the child is able to work on his own level to accomplish lessons within a three year period rather having to master a set amount and level of subjects in a single year as in a traditional classroom. The child is able to work at his own pace and level and find peers working on the same level. Because she has the same teacher and friends for those three years a greater understanding of relationships and sense of community develops.

The absorbent mind and sense of wonder of the primary child becomes an inquisitive pursuit of cause and effect through the reasoning mind of the elementary child. Building on the solid foundation established in the primary classroom the elementary child is eager to explore the why's and how's of everything in more detail and expand into related areas of interest. So the overall theme of the elementary curriculum is the same as the primary but on a different plane of the learning spiral. It is based on Maria Montessori's concept of cosmic education which centers on the Great Lessons where all the areas of the classroom are integrated rather than individual subjects.

The role of the elementary classroom guide or homeschool parent is to provide a stimulating environment rich with the tools and resources that will allow the child to continue on the path of discovery.

All Montessori work progresses from the known to the unknown, simple to complex, the whole to its parts, and tactile and concrete to abstract. The elementary child is eager for the more complex, the detail of the parts of the whole, and increasingly abstract concepts. In all the areas of the classroom the lessons are increasingly complex, detailed, and abstract as the child progresses.

Montessori elementary children have developed in the primary classroom many basic skills needed in their eager search for more information. They continue identifying, classifying, labeling, comparing, and categorizing. They now satisfy their increased sense of curiosity by putting into practical use the skills of reading and writing acquired in the primary classroom as they begin independent research and self-motivated discovery. Very few textbooks, if any, are used in the Montessori classroom. Guided by the student's own interests, studies include: ecosystems, zoology, botany, climates, advanced map skills and mapmaking, earth geology, more complex science experiments, history, detailed time lines, calendars, inventions and inventors, world literature; world geography, civics, economics, anthropology, the study of societies and civilizations, and significant people of the world.

Practical Life

The skills for maintenance of the classroom and its materials and care of the plants and animals that were practiced in the primary classroom are now fully integrated into the activities of the day as the children assume responsibility for their environment. Dusting the shelves, sweeping, vacuuming, mopping, keeping the equipment clean and organized, cooking and baking in snack and meal preparation, caring for the needs of the animals and plants, repairing household items, and other community activities are initiated and carried out by the children.

Language

In language the elementary children move into classic literature, poetry, and myth. Basic skills continue such as spelling, writing words and labeling, vocabulary, grammar symbols, sentence building, sentence diagraming, research skills such as alphabetizing and library use, oral reading and reporting, creative writing, classic literature, poetry, and drama.

The pink, blue and green language series continues from the primary classroom.

Pink series includes matching pictures, letters, and words; phonetics and word building with the moveable alphabet; rhyming words; sight words (such as the, to, was, said, of, a, as, has, they, she, by).

The Blue series includes double consonant blends, digraphs (sh, ch, th, wh), short vowels, secret messages.

The Green series includes long vowels, silent letters, soft letters (as in circle and giraffe), puzzle words (such as though, through, rough, enough, laugh, aunt, tongue, rhombus, heart, drought).

Language skills are practiced in all areas of the classroom.

Math

In math the elementary children continue wherever they left off in the primary with the Golden Bead materials. Work includes skip counting, squares and cubes. Work becomes increasingly abstract with the Stamp Game and the Dot Game, memorization of math facts, long multiplication, long division, factoring, operations with fractions and decimals, pre-algebra, and geometry. The algebraic aspects of the Binomial and Trinomial cubes that were assembled in the primary are now discovered. Some examples of materials are: Racks and tubes division, Multiplication checkerboard, Decimal checkerboard, Algebraic peg board, Square root board, Pi chart.

Geometry

Geometry has been a basic part of the primary study with the use of geometric insets, geometric solids, geometric cabinet, and the constructive boxes with plane figures to feel, trace, and manipulate to discover spatial relationships. More advanced geometry continues in the elementary classroom such as further exploration of polygons and quadrilaterals, angles, lines, relationships of lines and shapes, and use of tools such as a protractor.

Cultural Studies

The study of the continents continues as in the 3 to 6 classroom but in greater detail. By comparing and exploring the similarities of the needs of people around the world, the child gains a greater sense of interconnectedness with all living things and an awareness of being a part of the larger family of humanity. Cultural studies stimulates an interest in humanity and community service.

Geography

Use of all the puzzle maps, more detailed map making, and independent and group research on places of interest. Materials: Puzzle maps and labels, Pin Maps

Timelines and the Great Lessons

Oral stories of how the universe began, the formation of stars, earth's geologic time line, animal life on Earth, the story of humankind, the development of language and writing, and the development of mathematics and numbers. Most of all, the Great lessons stimulate curiosity and the search for more information through independent research. They make their own books and reports which they in turn share with their classmates. Some examples of materials are the Long Black Strip, Time Line Rope, Time line of Life, Time line of Civilizations, American History Time line, Time line of Scientists, Time line of Explorers, Time line of Art, Time line of Music.

Zoology and Botany

The primary classroom introduces the plant and animal kingdoms. Picture cards are used for naming, labeling, sorting, classifying, and learning parts of plants and parts of various animals. This continues in the elementary with research and a more detailed study of the five classes of invertebrates, nine phyla of invertebrates, and the classification and organization of the animal kingdom and plant kingdom. Many extended classrooms and home schools have farm animals and gardens to observe and care for.

Some examples of materials available are Leaf Characteristics (Leaf Types, Leaf Veins, Leaf Margins), The Five Kingdoms (Prokaryote, Protista, Fungi, Animal, Plant), Fungus Kingdom, Parts of a Mushroom. They may also be made using internet and books for resources.

Science

Experiments and various Montessori elementary materials for investigating such things as solution, sediment, the carbon cycle, water cycle, nitrogen cycle, periodic table of elements, constructing molecules, particles, matter, air, gases, protons, neutrons, quarks, string theory, parts of the atom, periodic table of elements, motion, force, gravity, magnetism, light, heat, energy, sound, electricity, simple machines, states of matter, acids and bases, physical and chemical changes.

Examples of materials available are Atom Board, Nomenclature Cards for Parts of the Atom, Periodic Table and Elements, various kits for science experiments.

Maria Montessori's chemistry experiments are in her book *From Childhood to Adolescence*, ch 7.

Journals and record keeping

The elementary student is increasingly more responsible for directing his or her own course of study and is responsible to draw up weekly (or monthly) agreements with the adult that outlines a work plan, and he or she keeps a work journal that also serves for record keeping.

Sources for materials mentioned are given in the guides.

RECOMMENDED REFERENCE BOOKS FOR ELEMENTARY

Children of the Universe: Cosmic Education for the Elementary Classroom, Michael and D'Neil Duffy, Parent Child Press (www.parentchildpress.com)

From Childhood to Adolescence, Maria Montessori, Schocken Books or The Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company Montessori Series available at www.montessori-namta.org.

The Advanced Montessori Method-II, Maria Montessori, available on the NAMTA website (see above).

Modern Montessori at Home II: A Creative Teaching Guide for Parents of Children 10 through 12 Years of Age, Heidi Anne Spietz, American Montessori Consulting

Teaching Montessori in the Home: The School Years, Elizabeth Hainstock, Random House
This book is very useful for homeschool. It is out of print but can be purchased from used book sellers or on amazon.com.

To Educate the Human Potential, Maria Montessori, available on the NAMTA website.

WORKBOOKS

Explode the Code phonics workbook series K-4
<http://www.explodethecode.com/> Explode the Code Online

READERS

Thoughtful Living Series- A set of 6 beginning readers that promote peace within, peace with the earth, and peace with others. www.parentchildpress.com

Cosmic Wonder Series- A set of 6 beginning readers. Each book introduces the child to some aspect of our universe. www.parentchildpress.com

Bob Books, Set 1: Beginning Readers, Bobby Lynn Maslen, Scholastic
Bob Books Set 2-Advancing Beginners, Bobby Lynn Maslen, Scholastic
Bob Books Set 3- Word Families, Bobby Lynn Maslen, Scholastic
Bob Books Set 4 - Complex Words, Bobby Lynn Maslen, Scholastic
Bob Books Set 5- Long Vowels, Bobby Lynn Maslen, Scholastic
Bob Books: Sight Words: Kindergarten, Lynn Maslen Kertell, Scholastic
Bob Books: Sight Words - First Grade, Lynn Maslen Kertell, Scholastic