A Brief Overview of Maria Montessori and the Montessori Curriculum

Maria Montessori was an Italian physician and educator. She lived in Italy during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She developed a pedagogical method that was intended to educate children for life. Montessori developed her theories about how children learn after her work with and her observation of young children.

Montessori believed that each child has within him or herself the potential or capability of becoming a unique person. She theorized that a secure, caring, and stimulating environment would allow the child to develop his or her greatest potential. Montessori came to understand that young children learn best through activity, experimenting, and experience. She realized that children need individual liberty, freedom of movement, and the right to freely choose their own activities. Freedom of choice includes the freedom to observe, freedom to repeat activities, and freedom from unwanted and unnecessary help. Montessori teachers observe and guide the children in their care.

The foundation of a Montessori classroom is a set of core principles. These principles include: appreciating childhood as a unique stage of human life, respecting the uniqueness of each individual child, helping and guiding children to achieve their fullest potential; creating a prepared environment; providing for active learning; fostering independence; allowing for multi-age grouping; and providing a wide variety of hands-on materials.

A Montessori classroom is a community of learners. Each child is accepted for the unique individual that he or she is. All children are welcomed into the community and every child knows that he or she is an important part of the community. Each child is able to work at his or her own pace and each child works toward mastery. Children are given the gift of time. They have time to learn, time to explore, time to experiment, time to grow, time to work, and time to play.

A true Montessori environment is one that is based upon the traditions of the past while at the same time investigating, experimenting, and looking at the most recent developments in early childhood education.

Susie and I are excited to part of a program that respects every child and we will work together to foster and enhance each child's development into the unique individual he or she is meant to be.