











Students at the Center; Structure at the Forefront **Montessori at a Glance**

Montessori education constitutes a major shift in how we think about what learning looks like, and how learning environments should be organized to support optimal development. This shift, which matches what neuroscience tells us about how the human mind works, comes down to two major concepts: student-centered activity and structure to support that activity. The table below offers more detail on how that shift takes place within a Montessori classroom.

CONVENTIONAL CLASSROOM

MONTESSORI ENVIRONMENT

Textbooks, Pencil and paper, Worksheets		Hands on materials, developed to enable discovery, self-correction, independence; Specially developed reference materials
Intellectual and social development disconnected		Working and learning matched to the social development of the child
Narrow, unit-driven curriculum		Unified, time-tested curriculum
Individual Subjects		Integrated subjects and learning based on developmental psychology
Block time, period lessons		Uninterrupted work periods
Single-graded classrooms		Mixed age classrooms
Students passive, quiet, at desks		Students active, talking with periods of spontaneous quiet, freedom to move
Students fit mold of school		School meets needs of students
Students leave for special help		Special help comes to students
Standardized, norm-referenced assessment		Process-focused assessment, skills checklist, mastery benchmarks