

## Montessori Method

### Language in the Montessori primary classroom

There are many facets to the language area in a Primary classroom. The lessons start with introducing the child to language and encouraging them to verbalize everything that they see and do. As the child gets older, the lessons follow the Montessori Method of moving from simple to complex, giving the child the ability to move forward and be successful. Language absorption comes from everywhere in the classroom from group lessons, individual lessons, one on one lessons, to conversations in the environment.

Here at Center, we utilize the Words in Color reading technique, best represented by the ever present charts that line a wall in each environment. This method was developed by Caleb Gattegno and has been used at the Center since our inception. Words in Color is a phonetic approach to teaching children how to read. Children are first introduced to the short vowels and then to the consonants. However, unlike other phonetic approaches, consonants are never sounded alone but are always combined with vowels to make syllables. This gives the child the ability to learn to read fluidly, without the break in sounding out the words. The technique also identifies each sound in our language, an incredible 51 sounds. Each sound has a specific color associated with it; the child learns when they see the color that no matter how many letters are in the color, that the sound is still the same (for example, the sound "i" has the color pink and white, as do all other combinations with that sound including igh (high), ie (lie), and ye (goodbye); all the same sound but not made up of the same letters).

In Montessori we want to present our students with many opportunities to absorb information, and have found over many years that the Words in Color system works wonderfully in this regard. It is a multisensory approach to teaching reading that benefits many different types of learners. Children not only read and access a more natural approach to spelling, but also write creatively and from dictation. They point words and sentences out on the large classroom charts, and then follow up with writing the words. It involves their senses and reinforces the hand to brain connection in learning.

Children, given the right environment and exposure, have what Maria Montessori described as a "reading explosion." It is a time when they are ready to learn to read and take off once they are introduced to the concept; therefore we begin teaching children to read in our Primary classrooms, at a time when they are very naturally interested in reading.

One way that you can support your child on his or her journey to be an avid reader is to spend time reading with your child at home, model reading yourself and visit our local libraries to explore the vast array of books that are available. Happy reading!