

Montessori Method

The Pink Tower

One of the most popular and iconic Primary Montessori materials is the Pink Tower. Manipulated by all ages, and loved by all, it is a wonderful sensorial material that has 10 wooden blocks, each painted a very particular and appealing shade of pink, and each increasing in size gradation. What you may not know is that the cubes actually vary in size from one cubic centimeter to one cubic decimeter, and differ equally in all dimensions by increments of one centimeter. Of course, the young child observes the cubes as just different sized blocks to manipulate, but now you know another aspect of the material.

For the young first year child, the Pink Tower is presented as an introduction to the sensorial area. Due to the number of cubes and the lesson itself, the child needs to have a great sense of concentration and focus to master the lesson. The lesson actually begins with the child removing one cube at a time from the tower and placing each randomly on a floor mat. Once all of the cubes are on the mat and mixed up, the child is encouraged to build the Pink Tower. Using concentration and visual discrimination, the child begins to reconstruct the Pink Tower to the standing position. All of this manipulation develops fine motor skills and consequently prepares the muscles for holding a pencil. As the child manipulates the Pink Tower, he begins to note the three-dimensional aspect of the material and is introduced to the different nomenclature associated with the cubes.

There are a few indirect purposes to the lesson, as there are with all Montessori Materials. Maria Montessori wanted to take every opportunity to plant different seeds of knowledge, so as to broaden the child's understanding and comprehension of concepts. An indirect purpose of the Pink Tower is to expose the child to geometry through the general observation of the geometrically regular differences in the size of the cube's edges, faces and total volumes. Another is to prepare the child for the concept of numbers in demonstrating the unit difference in distance between the edges of the ten successively larger cubes.

Whew..... that's a lot for a child to handle, but here is the amazing thing, she can handle it and more so, she actually begins to internalize the concept. Why? Because you chose to expose your child to an environment that gives him the opportunity to manipulate materials that were specifically developed to plant the seeds of knowledge. If you ask me, I think you made a wonderful choice!