

Welcome and Overview

Hi, this is Maren Schmidt.

Welcome to *Seeing Your Child The Montessori Way*. I'll be your guide for this program. Let me tell you a little bit about myself.

I'm the author of *Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents*.

For the past ten years I've written a blog, KidsTalkNews.com, in conjunction with my award winning syndicated newspaper column, *Kids Talk*, that focuses on child development issues.

My articles appear in major Montessori publications around the world, such as *Tomorrow's Child Magazine* and *Montessori Leadership*.

My newsletters are popular with Montessori schools across the globe and you may well have read one or two of my articles!

I am a Montessori trained elementary teacher and have a masters in education from Loyola College in Maryland.

For over thirty years, I have worked with children and their families in a variety of ways: Montessori teacher, Girl Scout leader, Sunday School teacher, Montessori school owner and administrator, parenting coach and workshop leader. And most important to me, as a mother to my two daughters.

I strive to communicate practical, put-it-in-to-action right now advice to parents, teachers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, everybody and anybody who works with children. I want to give you clear and effective information in a timely way.

If our children could verbalize what they need from the adults in their lives, the advice in my Kids Talk columns, workshops and books is what our children would want us to know.

Our children are constantly asking us to help them help themselves in a thousand ways.

As the adults in a child's life, parents and teachers, we are positioned to be the biggest help to a child, especially when we can see our child the Montessori way.



In my experience, Montessori philosophy and principles offer us the guidelines to maximize our efforts in helping our children learn and grow, as well as help us build strong and healthy life-long relationships with our children.

I look forward to helping you see your child, the Montessori way.

Once you see your child with a Montessori perspective, life will be different, and I think, more rewarding.

That's been my personal experience.

Let me tell you now about what we'll be doing in this program.

Overview

Over the next six weeks I'll be guiding you to feel *confident and empowered* about your decision to choose a Montessori education for your child.

Montessori education is different. One of these differences occurs when you work in partnership with your school to recognize your child's growth and progress in simple everyday activities.

Watching your child at home and at school, and acting purposefully on those observations, create vital and essential learning opportunities, for both you and your child.

Over my many years of teaching and running a school, I saw that when I had a strong and positive partnership with parents, their children benefited in unanticipated ways.

Perhaps this is best illustrated by what one of my eight-year old students told me—a boy who had been at our school since he was three years old:

"Ms. Maren," he said one morning as we worked together, "I'm really lucky. My mom has my back. My dad has my back. All my grandparents have my back. You have my back. And all the teachers and kids at school have my back. I'm a pretty lucky kid."

That is what I would wish for all children: *to have a team of adults who work together in support of the child as he or she journeys to adulthood.*

That is a lucky person.



A key Montessori principle we will put into practice during the next six weeks is this:

Observing the child involved in an activity of the child's choice.

Weeks 1 and 2

For our first two weeks we will use this principle of observation intensively as I ask you to look for certain behaviors in your child. I'll ask you to try to see from the child's point of view. After these two weeks of observation you should see your child differently. You may see your work as a parent differently. And I hope you'll see how your Montessori school supports your child's growth and well-being.

That's only one of the many Montessori differences I'll be showing you.

Week 3

Remember when you told people you were expecting a baby? When I announced I was pregnant it seemed like everybody in my ten-story office building had to stop by and tell me some terrifying story about childbirth.

The same type of thing happened when I told people we selected a Montessori school. That's why we'll spend some time in week three busting some Montessori myths, so you'll have the facts to dispel any misconceptions brought to you by well-meaning neighbors, friends, and family.

Week 4

In Week Four we'll look carefully at various Montessori principles to help you understand and recognize the essential elements of a Montessori program. We'll delve into overall childhood development principles.

Week 5

In Week Five we'll look at Montessori teaching and learning principles that help children thrive, and bloom, each in their own unique way—at home or at school.

Week 6

In Week Six I'll tell you about three key ways you can assure your child's success in a Montessori program. I've seen too many families over the years not be aware of these three important ideas, and face difficulty when there is no need to do so.



Parent Toolbox

Each week I'll offer you a key communication tool to put into what I am calling your Parent Toolbox. Once you put these tools into action, you'll see that these effective communication skills help not only at home, but at work and wherever you go.

Wow! Sounds like a semester in college doesn't it?

But you'll be able to take part in this program in less than *an hour per week for six weeks*. That's right. Less than an hour per week!

This program was designed to be used on a computer or mobile device, such as a smart phone or tablet.

This program goes where you go!

Each week's session is broken into short activity segments.

Each activity segment offers you three ways to take in this information:

- **Watch a short video, usually 5 to 10 minutes in length.**
- **Listen to a downloadable audio recording.**

You can load up your ipod with each week's activities, and listen where wherever you are.

- **Read a downloadable handout of the transcript**

At the end of this program you'll have a small book to refer to if you wish.

Or a combination of these three methods, whatever style of learning works best for you.

Have ten minutes? It's easy to watch, listen or read an activity segment wherever you are.

Wherever you go, this course is designed to go with you.

For the first week we'll send you daily reminders to help you establish a new habit, then reminders will come weekly.

In ten minutes a day I plan to help you put these fresh Montessori ideas into action.



I hope to show you common sense ideas and ways to see your children that may have you saying, *Why didn't I think of that?*

Also, I'll show you how to take the first steps in building community and parenting...the Montessori way.

I think you'll find great payback in this investment of time and effort of finding out more about the Montessori difference and making sure it is the right option for your family.

Your time is valuable and I'll work hard to give you effective information you can trust.

Have a question? In each activity segment there's a *What's On Your Mind* section where you can ask me a question. There is also a discussion area for everyone in the course to use.

Also, once a month you'll be invited to a **live hour-long question and answer session** with me. The recording of each show will be available to you, so you won't have to miss a thing!

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions in the *About You* and *What Do You Want To Learn* overview segments, either after this segment, or when you have a few minutes during this first week. It will help me get acquainted with you and your answers will help me fine-tune our activity segments.

We should have a good time, because it's all about seeing **your child**...the Montessori way.

Enjoy!

Until next time. This is Maren Schmidt.



PROGRAM OUTLINE

Welcome and Overview

About You And Your Child
What Do You Want To Learn?

Week 1: Seeing From the Child's Point of View

Activity 1: The Child's Natural Love Of The Adult
Activity 2: The Child's Love Of Place
Activity 3: The Child Is Always Becoming
Activity 4: The Child Has Time-Sensitive Opportunities For Growth
Parent Toolbox: Avoid Discouragement, Apologize

Week 2: Seeing From the Child's Point of View

Activity 1: The Child's Actions Are Development Driven
Activity 2: Children Seek to Create A Flow Of Activity
Activity 3: Imagination In The Young Child
Activity 4: Using A Child's Positive Psychology
Activity 5: The Child's Love Of Nature
Activity 6: The Spiritual Role Of Family
Parent Toolbox: Be Friendly With Error

Week 3: Busting Montessori Myths

Activity 1: Defining Montessori
Activity 2: MYTH Montessori Kids Do Whatever They Want
Activity 3: MYTH Montessori Schools Are Only For Rich Or Smart kids
Activity 4: MYTH Montessori Classrooms Are Too Structured/Unstructured
Activity 5: MYTH Montessori Schools Don't Allow For Play
Activity 6: MYTH Montessori Schools Don't Allow For Creativity
Parent Toolbox: Using Positive Statements

Week 4: Why Does The Montessori Method Work?

Activity 1: The Four Planes Of Development
Activity 2: Human Tendencies
Activity 3: Teaching vs. Learning—Pedagogical Principles
Activity 4: The Prepared Environment
Activity 5: Three-Hour Work Cycle
Activity 6: Concentration and Independence
Activity 7: Free Choice and More
Parent Toolbox: Any Unnecessary Help Is A Hindrance to Development

Week 5: Montessori Principles—More Than Teaching

Activity 1: Developing Trust and Respect Through Teaching
Activity 2: Montessori Principles Create An Action Plan
Activity 3: Tried and True Teaching Principles
Activity 4: Part Two—Tried and True Teaching Principles
Activity 5: Part Three—Tried and True Teaching Principles
Parent Toolbox: Help Me Help My Self

Week 6: Assuring Success

Activity 1: Understanding Free Choice
Activity 2: Defining Freedom
Activity 3: Seeing The Big Picture
Activity 4: Problem Solving
Activity 5: Five-Step Problem Solving
Parent Toolbox: Learning To Make Choices
What's Next? Program Summary