



## **Maintaining Excellence in Montessori Education**

One hundred years ago, Dr. Maria Montessori opened her first classroom in the ghettos of Rome, Italy. The work she did with those abandoned children developed into an internationally-recognized method of education that still thrives around the world today. As with any program, time has a way of trying to change things. How do Montessori schools maintain the essence and purity of Dr. Montessori's teachings and still maintain a standard of excellence for today?

Dr. Montessori addressed these concerns herself. She saw how excited educators around the world were by her program. She knew that schools around the world would want to implement what she had created. But she also knew that there was a danger of losing the integrity of the program unless certain standards were set and maintained. In 1929, Dr. Montessori established the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) to maintain, propagate and further her ideas and principles for the full development of the child. She created a set of standards by which to measure Montessori schools. Since then, Dr. Montessori and her family have played a key role in maintaining these standards.

Does a Montessori school have to follow the standards established by Dr. Montessori? The simple answer is "No." Schools can choose to follow Dr. Montessori's standards, but they are not obligated to do so. Unfortunately, this has created a wide gap in the quality of Montessori programs around the world. So how can you as a parent know that your school of choice is a quality Montessori program? Let's look at the standards set by Dr. Montessori.

Teachers must be trained at an AMI-approved training center, a Masters level training program with in-depth, hands-on experience both with the classroom materials and the children. This degree of exposure creates a deep understanding of Dr. Montessori's theories and a true belief in the gifts of every child.

There must be only one trained teacher and one untrained assistant per classroom, to ensure that the children are given the maximum opportunity to develop self-confidence and independence. There must be a complete set of Montessori materials, purchased from an AMI-approved manufacturer which ensures the highest degree of precision.

The class must have a minimum of 28 children (10 in the Toddler class) of mixed ages, representing a three year age range. This ensures appropriate social development and allows for peer mentoring.

Classes must meet 5 days per week for a minimum of 3 uninterrupted hours each day. Kindergarteners must have an additional 2 hours of uninterrupted time in the afternoon. These extended periods of uninterrupted work allow the children adequate time to develop concentration and self-reliance.

An AMI-trained consultant must visit the school at least once every three years to evaluate how well the school is maintaining these standards and what improvements could be made. These consultations provide an opportunity for the staff to revisit their training and refresh their commitment to Dr. Montessori's beliefs. On-site visits are an essential element in maintaining the high standard of excellence Dr. Montessori envisioned.

The AMI-recognized schools in Phoenix invite you to come see the difference for yourself. See why AMI sets the standard of excellence in Montessori and why for 100 years, the Montessori method of education has provided thousands of children with an education for life.

*For more information, see [www.montessori-ami.org](http://www.montessori-ami.org).*