



Differences between a Montessori and Non-Montessori Environment

Montessori Environment	Non-Montessori Environment
Child-centered and teacher guided with a focus on self-regulation, control, and choice.	Teacher directed with limited choice, children rely on adult direction and external praise.
Self-paced.	Same thing taught to class at the same time.
3-year age span.	Often single age groups.
2-3 hour uninterrupted work cycle.	Schedule is divided up into time blocks.
Classroom environment naturally calm and peaceful.	Varies between higher noise level and adult-enforced quiet.
Orderly and purposefully organized - materials arranged for children to access and choose.	Teacher sets out materials.
Minimalist aesthetic, supports child focus, not visually distracting.	Can be cluttered, visually overwhelming, things on the walls not meaningful.
Academic skills intentionally built into meaningful activities.	Often less emphasis on academics or an over emphasis on disconnected set of skills.
Teachers are certified via a rigorous Montessori training program - national and international standards.	Variable - Early Childhood degree using a wide range of philosophies and methods.
Philosophy continues through elementary school (and even middle and high school).	Not connected to elementary programs.

Both Environments:

- Encourage children to socialize and work together.
- Schedule parent conferences and regular communication.
- Have ½ and full day options.
- Allow plenty of outside time and recess.
- Foster imagination and creativity.
- Allow parents to visit the classroom for special activities.
- Serve a wide range of children and learning styles.
- Transition children successfully into a wide range of programs.
- Teach classes including art and music by a specialist.