

Discipline



RATIONALE

"Discipline is "not ...a fact but a way." True discipline comes more from within than without and is the result of steadily developing inner growth. Just as the very young child must first learn to stand before she can walk, she must develop an inward order through work before she is able to choose and carry out her own acts. Surprisingly enough, Montessori found that it was through the very liberty inherent in her classrooms that the children were given the means to reveal their inner or self-discipline. Independence did not diminish respect for authority but rather deepened it. One of the things that aroused her greatest interest was that order and discipline seemed to be so closely united that they resulted in freedom." Maria Montessori

DEFINITION

Discipline presupposes a certain degree of obedience. Before the age of three, a child is truly unable to obey unless what is asked happens to correspond with one of their vital urges. At this stage, the personality has not formed to the level where he/she is capable of making a choice to obey. It is this level which Montessori termed the first level of obedience. A toddler can obey, but not always. The second level of obedience is reached when the child is capable of understanding another person's wishes and can express them in their own behaviour. When this second level of obedience is reached, most parents and teachers would think they had reached their goal. Most adults ask only that children obey. The goals of Montessori reach beyond this, however, to the third level which Montessori called "joyful obedience". At this stage, the child has internalized obedience, or we might say, had developed self-discipline where he/she sees clearly the value of what is being offered to them by authority and rushes to obey. This is not blind obedience at all, but is a fully informed choice by a personality, which has grown in freedom and developed to its fullest potential. This is what we want for our children. With this level of obedience or self-discipline comes a degree of self-respect in which a child cannot help but respect the rights and needs of others alongside their own. He/she is then able to learn and grow freely in the security of a community of respectful individuals.

AIMS

- To create a safe and healthy environment in which the children feel secure and nurtured.
- To promote the development of the whole child.
- To help the children grow in self-worth, confidence and independence of thought.
- To communicate to the children, values and beliefs, that are in keeping with our philosophy.
- To protect the children from physical, social, emotional and intellectual harm and to provide them with the skills to cope with possible threats to their personal safety, both within and outside school.
- To encourage tolerance, empathy and sensitivity to the needs of others.
- To promote warm, positive and respectful relationships between children, staff and parents.
- Encourage all to share of their giftedness and energies in a spirit of service;
- Support staff through structures which allow for personal and professional growth;
- Give every opportunity to parents, who enter into an educational partnership with their children's educators, to share in their children's intellectual, emotional and spiritual development;
- Support staff, students and families in times of grief, sickness and stress.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Montessori Approach stresses the importance of total development which includes care of the physical, emotional and moral, as well as the intellectual needs of all children. Activities and experiences are planned to help the child develop the ability to take responsibility for their own well being and to care for others.

Staff endeavour to make themselves aware of professional help available e.g. community health centres, speech therapists, optometrists, screening facilities etc. Regular communication is maintain for all children through the school providing opportunities to advise and discuss appropriate avenues for help and support as the need arises.

At all times the interest of the child is the central concern.

The Montessori approach is to assist the child to develop that self-control and discipline. Some of this is developed through the use of the materials and the inability of the child to enforce their will onto something else or the need to develop control over oneself in order to complete the work effectively.

Children are considered to be whole and good but their actions may not be in keeping with the expectations of the social community. Any discussion with the child is in the context of their actions and not on their character or being.

Children having difficulties with another are encouraged in the first instance to discuss their problem with the other child concerned. Children remain with each other until both have discussed the issue and reached an agreement that satisfies both parties. Lessons are given to children as a group and on an individual basis and situation on ways to discuss an issue with another person and ways to resolve the conflict.

Staffs are aware that any verbal or visual observation may not give a true picture of the situation and that all parties involved in the conflict should also be involved in the resolution.

Children having difficulties with being involved in the discussion or seem to be having difficulties with being with or near other children that day are encouraged to take time away from the other children or to remain with the supervising adult until it is felt that he/she can manage themselves again.

If there is regular disruption or conflict with other children, consideration may be given to the work or play the child is involved in; personal difficulties e.g. illness, medication, out of school problems. Developmental difficulties or other considerations, discussion and support should be sought from the parents to assist the child. Assistance may also be sought from other staff members or professionals as felt necessary to assist the child's social development.

At no time is corporal punishment permitted or to be encouraged by anyone.

The goal of the Montessori classroom whether it is a prepared environment for infants and toddlers, pre-primary, primary, or secondary students, is first and foremost the development of skills necessary for a productive and fulfilling life. The best of the academic curriculums are useless if the child does not develop inner discipline, integrity, and respect for others and oneself. The young person who faces the world of tomorrow armed with self-confidence and self - discipline is far more likely to achieve success and happiness. They will be prepared to meet any challenges that the "real world" may present, and will hopefully bring to that world some of the peace and joy they experienced in the Montessori environment.

The more the capacity to concentrate is developed, the more often the profound tranquillity in work is achieved, then the clearer will be the manifestation of discipline within the child.

Maria Montessori

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES	REVIEW DATES
Security Workplace Health and Safety	Approved: May 2009, Reviewed: February 2010, Reviewed: March 2014, Reviewed February 2015 Reviewed February 2017 New Logo 2018