



## Comox Valley *Montessori Society*

### Background Information

In 2005, a dedicated group of local parents, with a common interest in finding elementary Montessori education for their children, gathered together to form the Comox Valley Montessori Society (CVMS). The CVMS is a registered non-profit society that supports the further development and continuation of Montessori-inspired education in the Comox Valley.

On January 31, 2006, the school board voted unanimously to start the preparations for a 3 year pilot project. Commencing in September of 2006, the first public Montessori class in the Comox Valley School district (and on Vancouver Island) – a K/1 blend – found its home at Glacier View Elementary School. Since then, the program has become a regular program in Comox Valley Schools and has been established as a Kindergarten to grade 7 program. Now at Queneesh Elementary, we have eight multi-aged classrooms.



**“Education demands, then,  
only this: the utilization of the  
inner powers of the child for  
his  
own instruction. ”**

The Montessori program in its present form is collaboration between the School District, the teachers, administration, and the families involved. In our case, it means the Comox Valley School district, Queneesh Elementary staff, and the CVMS all work together as one team with a common purpose: To provide a Montessori inspired program for the children of Comox Valley Schools. We are fortunate to have qualified BC teachers who are also Montessori-trained and certified.



In September, 2020 we are pleased to offer Montessori to the families on the west side of town at Courtenay Elementary. The two sites will work closely together with the support of Comox Valley Schools, CVMS and our Montessori team.

### Keep Up To Date

Make sure you are on the CVMS contact list by visiting our website [www.cvmontessori.com](http://www.cvmontessori.com); go to the “Join CVMS” page, fill in the contact information, click “submit”, and then follow through and contact the school directly with your intentions or questions at 250-334-4089.

By being on both the CVMS and the school contact list, you will be kept informed of information relevant to both sides of the collaboration.

## School Preparedness

The student who has a willingness to learn, an interest in joining in with group activities, and a desire to make new friends and try new things will make the transition to school more easily than a student without this level of readiness.

Montessori students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and conduct. The classroom environment should ideally be consistent with the family's own philosophy.

We urge parents to consider the needs and abilities of their own child. We encourage you to understand the available options as fully as possible before making a committed decision. Each child will face their own challenges in life and need the ongoing support of their family as they grow up. As parents, we seek the best possible fit for our child's own individual learning goals and strengths, but the best fit for the family must also be considered.

## CVMS

Parents are encouraged to join the CVMS. The CVMS is involved in fundraising for future growth as well as advocating for the program at the school and district level. They organize and hold community-building events within the membership, bring awareness about the program and provide a forum for the membership to have a voice.

The CVMS is an entity that is consistently evolving and growing as the Montessori program does the same. The goal is to be open, inclusive and to serve the best interests of all the children.

It is a free and easy way to stay involved and up to date. Simply go to our website: [www.cvmontessori.com](http://www.cvmontessori.com) and click on "Enroll." They will send you occasional emails about monthly meetings, Montessori events, and fundraisers that are on-going throughout the year.

## Program Funding

Comox Valley Schools provides the school, the classroom, the teachers, administration, and support staff. Comox Valley Schools also provides funding to help provide the replacement and repair of Montessori materials for the classrooms. CVMS will continue to fundraise to cover ongoing costs associated with the additional new classrooms to the program.

## Other Ways to Get Involved

### Fundraising

The CVMS has partnered with the Queneesh PAC to help with school-wide fundraising. Help with planning is always appreciated. We're always open to new fundraising ideas!

### High Tea & Silent Auction

This is the main event of the year. We need and are appreciative of the many family volunteers and business donors who help make this event a success.

### Attend Board Meetings

CVMS meet s monthly and everyone is welcome. We encourage parents to attend to keep informed and to contribute to discussions and planning. This is a great way to be involved and to have a say in what is going on. The school PAC runs from 6-7 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. The CVMS meeting follows it from 7-8 pm. Childcare is available.

### Classroom Assistance

Parent involvement is always appreciated for special occasions, such as field trips, special projects and celebrations.





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## Montessori Myths and Assumptions

### 1. If I'm concerned about enrolling my child in the neighbourhood school system, then I should try the Montessori program instead.

**Fact:** This Montessori-inspired program is one of the many options of the public school system. The Montessori-inspired method is applied within the public school setting.

### 2. I feel my child will not do well in a large class with lots of children so I should try Montessori.

**Fact:** Montessori primary and intermediate class sizes are all set by the district standard. This is consistent with all other classes in the district.

### 3. My child is extremely intelligent and requires a challenge, so I think she/he would benefit from the Montessori approach.

**Fact:** The Montessori method is designed to offer self-paced learning opportunities and children learn by doing. If the child is a curious, enthusiastic, and responsible participant in classroom activities, then they will get the most possible benefit from the program. These are the same aptitudes that would benefit a child in many classroom situations. However, the Montessori teacher neither rewards nor punishes; rather, she/he encourages students to set high standards for themselves and develop intrinsic sources of motivation. That means that age-appropriate levels of responsibility are required and the family's approach should ideally be consistent with the Montessori philosophy.

### 4. The Montessori class is going to be a fun place where children are free to do what they want.

**Fact:** The Montessori class offers choices within limits (this is where personal responsibility works with guidance and direction). There is a prescribed way to use each material and the children are introduced to each material by the teacher. This process involves active listening, cooperation, concentration, and consideration of others. Incorrect use of the materials is not permitted. Respect for the materials and the learning of others is a constant requirement. Fun is found in joyful learning experiences using all 5 senses. Classroom behaviour requires developing self-control and choosing to be an active participant in the learning process.



**5. The Montessori program should not be considered for students with special needs. By placing my child with special needs in a Montessori program, he/she will not be able to receive individualized and specialized support services from the school district**

**Fact:** Our Montessori-inspired program is open to all students including those with special needs. A child's unique strengths and needs should be carefully considered within the Montessori philosophy before decisions on placement are made. Much about the Montessori philosophy and materials make it a wonderful option for many children with special needs; however, the program may not be in the best interests of all children.

Many core competencies and big ideas taught in Montessori are done so with unique hands-on materials. This provides opportunity for students to augment their learning through a tactile and kinesthetic approach. This multi-modal approach to learning appeals to many students with diverse needs.

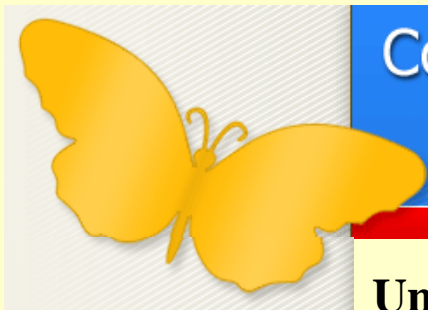
Montessori children are encouraged to work at their own pace and to follow their interests. This encouragement of freedom and self-pacing of learning, are often beneficial to children with unique learning needs.

There is an expectation of independence and self-monitoring of progress that students in Montessori are encouraged to develop. Students with special needs have the same expectation of development towards independent learning and self-monitoring.

**6. By Placing my child with special needs in a Montessori program, he/she will not be able to receive individualized and specialized support services from the district.**

**Fact:** As with all programs in the Comox Valley School District, our Montessori classrooms welcome all types and styles of learners. Students with special needs are supported with accommodations and individualized programming to support their unique learning needs. Within our Montessori Program, all students have opportunity to access resources available from our District Student Service Team, including our Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, District Speech and Language Therapists, as well as our school-based Learning Support Teachers. Students with Individualized Learning Plans are case managed by school-based staff, and support services are applied as available.





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## Understanding the Montessori Approach

### Montessori within the Public School

The Montessori inspired program in the Comox Valley is one of the options within Comox Valley Schools. It offers an engaging blend of curriculum in each prepared environment (classroom) that is both unique to Montessori and incorporates public school *core and curricular competencies*. Students are taught these skills, attitudes, and content using a method inspired by Maria Montessori and the use of Montessori materials specific to the developmental needs and interests of children.

Students will be given opportunities to learn the fundamentals of the "Redesigned" BC Curriculum: Applied Design, Skills, and Technology; Arts Education; Career Education; English Language Arts; Mathematics; Science; Physical and Health Education; and Core French starting in grade 5. To review BC's new curriculum, please visit:

<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum>.

The Montessori program is well-positioned to implement the new BC curriculum because the structure of the classrooms supports personalized learning and the student's developmental needs.

### The Montessori Approach

The Montessori-inspired approach is child centered. Teachers focus on each child's inner potential and strive to provide the right environment, materials and experiences to help a child reach this potential. As stated by Maria Montessori, "Liberty in a structured environment" are the guidelines, and foundation of the classroom.



### Distinctive Montessori Elements

Some of the classroom applications that are distinctive to Montessori include:

- Practical Life
- Peace Education
- Grace and Courtesy
- Nature and Culture
- Maria Montessori Materials
- Small Group Presentations
- Shared materials

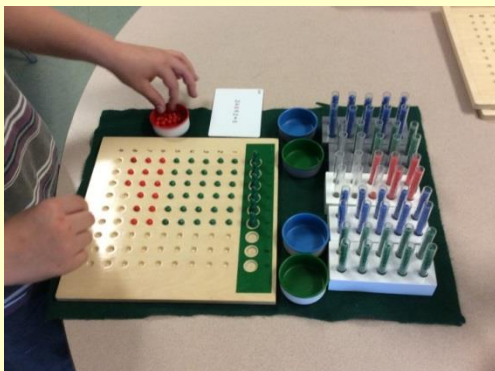
## Practical Life

This component of the Montessori program is very important as the child takes responsibility for caring for self, their personal belongings and the classroom prepared environment. The approach elicits a spirit of helpfulness, community, responsibility, and sense of order that allows for independence. Practical life activities build individual concentration.



## Peace Education

Students learn how to be self-aware, regulate their feelings, and be peaceful with others in their diverse communities. To resolve conflicts, children are guided to the Peace Table. This involves a time for personal reflection, problem-solving, and making a plan for restitution.



## Grace and Courtesy

The grace and courtesy curriculum refers to learning and practicing manners and provides children with the opportunity to become aware and thoughtful of others. Grace and courtesy lessons have been created to give children the opportunity to take others into consideration.

Montessori teachers work with an awareness that they are modelling to their students how to be gracious, courteous, and empathetic to one another. Students are guided to be kind, safe, and sensitive in their words and actions.

Grace and courtesy is very important to the Montessori approach because in order to successfully self-direct their learning, students engage and cooperate within the social group.

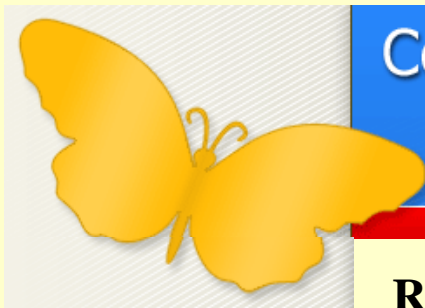
## Artistic Development

An open art space is provided and children are free to choose the time, method, and available medium for their art. Art is often linked to materials and subjects of study. Renowned artists are introduced to provide inspiration. Classical music is enjoyed during quiet work time in class.

## Physical Development

Physical Education is given inside or outside the gym. Attentive and safe behaviour is taught first. Cooperative games are played and good listening skills are reinforced.

Game rules and fair play are given emphasis. Tagging games and other activities with throwing, catching, aiming, and gaming stations are used to teach coordination and motor skills.



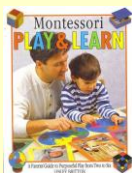
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## Recommended Montessori Reading

Armstrong, Thomas, PhD. In Their Own Way

Bee, H. The Developing Child.

Britton, Lesley. Montessori Play and Learn: A Parent's Guide to Purposeful Play From Two to Six.

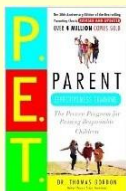


Diamond, Louise. Celebrate Peace

Gettman, David. Basic Montessori: Learning Activities for Under Fives

Gitter, Lena L. The Montessori Approach to Discipline

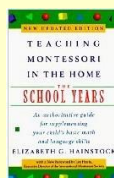
Gordon, Thomas. Parent Effectiveness Training.



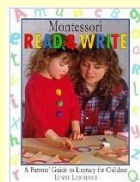
Hainstock, Elizabeth. The Essential Montessori: An introduction to the Woman, the Writings, the Method and the Movement.

Hainstock, Elizabeth. Teaching Montessori In the Home: The Preschool Years

Hainstock, Elizabeth. Teaching Montessori In The Home: The School Years



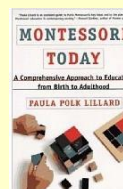
Lawrence, Lynn. Montessori Read and Write



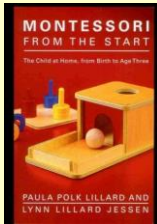
Leboyer, F. Birth Without Violence.

Lillard, Paula Polk. Montessori: A Modern Approach

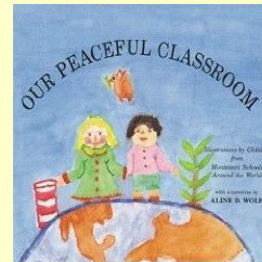
Lillard, Paula Polk. Montessori today: A Comprehensive Approach to Education From Birth to Adulthood.



Lillard, Paul Polk. Montessori From The Start: The Child at Home, From Birth to Age Three



Wolf, Aline. Our Peaceful Classroom



Wolf, Aline. A Parents Guide to the Montessori Classroom

O'Connor, Barbara. Mammolina: a Story about Maria Montessori.

O' Connor, Barbara. Montessori

Seldin, Tim. The Montessori Way

Seldin, Tim. How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way



Montessori Foundation Tomorrows Child magazine



Speitz, Heidi Anne. Modern Montessori at Home

Speitz, Heidi Anne. Montessori at Home

Stephanson, Susan. Child of the World: Essential Montessori for ages 3-12+

Wentworth, Roland A. Montessori for the Millenium

White, Dr. Burton. The First Three Years of Life & What is Montessori Preschool?