



## Elementary Curriculum

### Language

Upon entering the elementary Montessori program the language skill level of each student is assessed. The curriculum is designed to then further those skills in all areas of language. In addition, the student practices oral presentation skills by presenting their research to the class and participating in short, informal plays in the classroom. This expands to presentations for the preschool and Kindergarten classes. Each year the student does a Passion Project by researching and presenting a topic of their choice in written, visual, and oral formats. Passion Project presentations to parents are a highlight of the year.

**Reading** Students increase comprehension through reading silently as well as aloud to peers and teachers. Reading at home for 20 minutes daily is encouraged. Small book groups are used to learn new strategies for comprehension and critical thinking. The teacher reads aloud daily.

**Writing** Creative writing is encouraged through weekly journal work even before spelling and grammar are mastered. Sentence structure, spelling, and story-writing skills develop as student's skills improve. The Six Traits of writing\* are introduced. Students write book reports, poetry, and research papers.

**Grammar** Students study the parts of speech and their functions using Montessori materials. They find and symbolize each part of speech in literature and in their own writing. Grammar is integrated into other areas of study. For example, to play the Detective Adjective game, the child must be able to identify scalene, isosceles, and equilateral triangles and obtuse, acute, and right angles.

**Spelling** The Instructional Level Spelling\* program is used. The children review each word family every year. Word studies -- prefixes, suffixes, compound words, homonyms, homophones, homographs, antonyms, and synonyms aid spelling improvement. Latin and Greek roots are also studied.

**Handwriting** First grade students work on perfecting print. Cursive is introduced in second grade. Keyboarding begins in third grade using the "Ten Thumbs"\* program on the computer. At all levels the students use direct practice on the skills as well as in their journals, spelling, and class work.

### Mathematics

Students entering the elementary Montessori program from a Montessori preschool and kindergarten usually have a good math foundation. The elementary materials allow students to develop an in-depth understanding of math concepts as well as memorization of math facts. Students receive individual and small group lessons and work at their own pace. The curriculum is organized so that students can independently follow the sequence with the teacher's guidance.

Students work simultaneously on the math operations and math fact memorization. The sequence for operations is as follows:

- Addition
- Subtraction
- Single digit multiplication
- Single digit division
- Multiple digit multiplication
- Multiple digit division

The following areas are presented as well:

- Skip counting
- Fractions
- Decimals
- Estimation
- Problem solving
- Time
- Measurement
- Patterns
- Probability and Statistics
- Money (the Money Savvy\* program is presented every other year to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades)

### **Geometry**

Geometry studies begin with the line and its parts and continue through the study of angles, triangles, polygons, quadrilaterals, and circles. Area and volume are covered. Similarity, congruency, and equivalency are also studied.

### **Cultural Subjects**

History, Geography, Current Events, Life Sciences, Earth, and Physical Science are all included in this area. Students typically choose a country to research and cover all these areas as their interest directs. Students discover other cultures by looking at how basic human needs are met there (e.g. food, clothing, shelter, transportation, belief systems) as well as customs and holidays.

Along with students' individual study the following is introduced:

**History** is introduced using timelines. Areas studied include: the creation of the solar system, the earth's development, the development of life and humans.

**Geography** includes studies of major land and water forms, biomes, physical, cultural and political geography, flag studies, and geology.

**Botany** studies use live specimens and studies of the parts of plants. Classification is introduced. Study of native plants and care of plants is encouraged.

**Zoology** studies are always popular. The organization of the animal kingdom is introduced. Students do independent studies of specific animals. Other topics covered include cell structure, the classes of vertebrates and invertebrates and their parts.

### **Arts**

Each year the students ride the city bus to The Red Gallery where Mindy Clark provides an in-depth study of principles of art. The students learn art appreciation and critique from viewing the art in the gallery. There is an additional cost for this class.

In the classroom the children are provided art materials and our recycle/reuse basket for independent art expression. Different art techniques are introduced

during the year usually as part of holiday celebrations. Sewing, needlework, knitting, weaving, and crocheting are also available to the students.

The students work together to present a short play for the school at our Winter Sing-a-long. A story is chosen and the group decides on scenery, costumes, and parts. Other opportunities include participating in Reader's Theatre or putting on a play as a book report.

**Technology** Beginning in third grade students do guided searches to obtain information on their research topics; a search is done by the teacher and the student then follows the search directions written by the teacher. The teacher shares news items and other items of interest with the class, e.g. a newly discovered underwater volcano, White Pass Ski conditions. General guidelines for the use of the Internet and basic vocabulary are covered. It is important that students learn how to understand and use the basics of information hierarchy for effective searching (i.e., investigating a general category down to more specific subtopic), by using encyclopedias and other resource materials.

**Physical Education** Karate and skiing are offered at additional cost. Group games, rules, cooperation and sportsmanship are taught along with basic skills such as jumping rope, ball throwing, catching and dribbling, and fine motor eye-hand coordination. Students participate in Mileage Club throughout the year. Yoga as a stretching and calming activity is also presented.

**Service Projects** Each year the students participate in service projects in three areas. The first is service to the school and always includes being a "Reading Buddy" to a kindergarten student. The students also help with office projects and are responsible for the Giving Tree in December. The second area of service is to our local community. Projects done in the past include making tray decorations for the local hospital, making scarves for the homeless and collecting and bagging hygiene items for the homeless as well. The third area of service is to the wider world. In 2008-09 the children chose to collect Pennies for Peace to help build schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

\*For more information on these topics please talk to the elementary teacher or see the following:

- The Six Traits of Writing is a framework for teaching and evaluating writing skills developed at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, OR. The traits are: Ideas and Content, Organization, Word Choice, Voice, Sentence Fluency, and Writing Conventions. See [educationnorthwest.org](http://educationnorthwest.org) for more information.
- Instructional Level spelling - see [ilspelling.com](http://ilspelling.com)
- Ten Thumbs typing - see [tenthumbstypingtutor.com](http://tenthumbstypingtutor.com)
- Money Savvy - see [msgen.com](http://msgen.com)