

Childcare & Early Education

Preschool Education – Montessori Method of Education



This entire house was rearranged to coordinate with Montessori method: Creating an environment for kids to be the person-in-charge of this classroom.

The Montessori Method of education was originated in Italy. However, its application in Hong Kong is only at the preliminary stage. Many people in Hong Kong have heard the term "Montessori," but few really understand its rationale and philosophy.

Montessori pedagogy has attracted worldwide attention. Currently, about 22,000 Montessori schools in approximately 200 countries are adopting it. In order to be a Montessori school, a school must have at least one teacher who holds an international license granted by an accredited Montessori institution.

Learning motivation

According to Ms. Daisy Lau, a licensed teacher of the American Montessori Society (AMS),

Montessori pedagogy emphasizes preparing a safe and educational environment for children to do their work under freedom of choice. The method helps them to develop their minds. Therefore, Montessori Education is not just a teaching method but an opportunity for children to enhance their abilities in preparation for an adult environment. Most important is objective observation.

"So, we don't need too much language, just enough to assist and show them. We hope children can learn with self-motivation and keep their basic instincts. Education is such a long process that a solid foundation is necessary," she continued.

In Chinese societies, adults sometimes have bias towards children, that discourages their internal motivation unconsciously and affects their learning abilities in the future. Montessori Method of Education is a child-centered approach, which allows children to explore with the use of educational materials found in their daily lives.

Our second brain

Parents have to prepare a learning environment for the children in an effort to preserve their learning instinct. The environment has to

be safe and educational, so it can foster their desire to explore freely. The Montessori Method emphasizes "Hand is our second brain." Since toddlers rely on their own hands to do and explore so as to conceive an idea while their speech and text capability have yet to develop.

"In terms of child philosophy, they are 'good' and our method is to let kids freely tap into their potential, instead of limiting their sphere of activity," Lau said.

Many parents are anxious to teach toddlers about words, thinking the more words they learn, the brighter they seem. Different schools of professionals have different opinions on this issue. "Montessori aims to nurture children's interest in words. They have to learn how to speak so that they can relate words and ideas, which can't be achieved simply by memory. We need to observe their sensitivity to words and teach them at appropriate times.

Kitchen can be a classroom

Ms Ranny Yau, a secondary school teacher with a son aged three years old, completed the Montessori parent course with her husband and mother-in-law early this year. This eight-hour course cost them HK\$1,470 in total, which she found reasonable. She applied the theories learned by frying an egg and even steak with her son, as well as asking her son to mix all the ingredients to make a cake when he was two. She was impressed to see her son finishing all the portions on his plate for the food was cooked by him.

"The most useful thing I learned from the

class is that kids indeed have a lot of potential to learn by themselves. We only need to give them room and provide them a safe environment. More importantly, we believe they can do a task by themselves without our saying don't do this or that," said Yau. She takes her boy to Montessori toddler class once a week now, as she finds the classroom there is well-facilitated to keep a child's self-learning initiatives.



Allowing kids to take part in cooking, they can learn by doing and take more pleasure in eating, which saves the feeding time also.