



Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage in Montessori settings



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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The Montessori Schools Association welcomes the opportunity to work with the Department for Children, Schools and Families in order to demonstrate how the Montessori approach to education shares the underlying principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and supports the welfare and learning and development requirements.

As Montessorians enter the second century of their work with children in the United Kingdom, the principles identified by Dr Maria Montessori continue to underpin the work of our schools. The EYFS expresses these principles in terms with which Montessorians are very familiar: that each child is unique; that positive relationships form the basis for personal respect supporting learning; that the learning environment has a key role in extending learning and development, and that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. The Montessori approach, which seeks to provide organised play as a means of promoting specific skills and concepts, is at one with the EYFS view of learning. In particular both see observation of children as central to promoting children's learning and development.

In this booklet we aim to show how the Montessori approach to planning, to the areas of learning and to assessment meets the requirements of the EYFS without compromising Montessorian principles. The EYFS supports these Montessori approaches, which we have used for over a hundred years, and we can demonstrate how this supports the requirements from September 2008.

We are most grateful for the work which Barbara Isaacs, of the Montessori Centre International, and Ruth Pimentel, National Director of the Early Years National Strategies, have put into this document. The Montessori Schools Association is pleased to be able to demonstrate the continuing relevance of Maria Montessori's work in educating young children in the twenty-first century.

Dr Martin Bradley
National Chair, Montessori Schools Association

Section 1: The Early Years Foundation Stage – principles into practice

The following four themes and principles guide all early years practitioners working with children. They are closely linked with the Government’s agenda for children as set out in *Every Child Matters*, www.everychildmatters.gov.uk.

An overview of these principles can be found on the EYFS poster and further explanation is given in the colour-coded ‘Principles into Practice’ cards.

The following text offers a Montessori perspective on these principles:

1. A Unique Child

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Montessori perspective: within each child lies a hidden potential. For this potential to be unlocked we need to give children the opportunities to develop trust and autonomy, which will nurture confidence, self-esteem and courage. The ability to embrace new challenges, take risks and act with initiative is a natural outcome of these conditions and underpins the principles of the ‘unique child’. Montessori saw freedom as the single most important factor in allowing children to develop as spontaneous, creative individuals.

‘This fashioning of the human personality is a secret work... All that we know is that he has the highest potentialities, but we do not know what he will be. He must ‘become incarnate’ with the help of his own will.’
(Montessori, 1966, 32)

2. Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Montessori perspective: the parents are the child’s first educators and need to be respected. A partnership with parents gives children opportunities to develop their full potential and become unique, strong and autonomous individuals with consideration for themselves and others.

‘Little children between three and six years of age have a special psychology. They are full of love. They are only without love if they are ill-treated. If they are badly treated their real nature is altered. They are full of love themselves and need to be loved in order to grow.’
(Montessori, 1989, p. 41)

3. Enabling Environments

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Montessori perspective: a favourable environment, which supports the child's self-construction, is carefully prepared by knowledgeable practitioners, ensuring that children's developmental needs are met. This is further explained in the *Absorbent Mind* (1949) and is linked with Montessori's view of human tendencies, stages of development and sensitive periods. While the Montessori legacy of specific learning materials is strong and will be key in preparing enabling environments, it is also creative and forward-thinking to include other materials in the environment to meet the individual needs and interests of children, provided these are used in such a way as to support the essential principles and philosophy of the Montessori approach.

'In an open environment, that is, one that is suitable to his age, a child's psychic life should develop naturally and reveal its inner secret.'
(Montessori, 1966, p. 110)

4. Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

Montessori perspective: not just being a particular way of learning and development, more importantly Montessori principles are concerned with the development of the whole personality, seeing it as the foundation on which everything which follows will be built. Children are active learners and will learn from the environment if it offers appropriate stimuli to their development. Learning is guided by the children's developmental needs, and flourishes when the children are given time and space to observe, explore and investigate the environment and engage with it. Empathetic practitioners play an active part in engaging children with the favourable environment. They facilitate the child's need to learn, not only from them, but also from peers and by themselves.

... it aims, in short, at a total development of the personality; a harmonious growth of all the potentialities of the child, physical and mental, according to the law of its being.' (Montessori, 1965, p141)

'The child who concentrates is immensely happy; he ignores his neighbours or the visitors circulating about him. For the time being his spirit is like that of a hermit in the desert; a new consciousness has been born in him – that of his own individuality.' (Montessori, 1949, p. 273)



<p>A Unique Child</p> <p>Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.</p>	<p>Positive Relationships</p> <p>Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.</p>	<p>Enabling Environments</p> <p>The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.</p>	<p>Learning and Development</p> <p>Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.</p>
<p>Child development</p> <p>Understanding of human development underpins all Montessori practice. Montessorians relate human tendencies, stages of development and sensitive periods with developmental theory. They make links using detailed and comprehensive observations of children and records of their activities, which serve as planning tools for children's learning.</p>	<p>Respecting each other</p> <p>The recognition of uniqueness of all individuals is reflected in trusting and respectful relationships between all adults and children within the favourable environment. It is the practitioners' role to 'follow the child': Children are seen as the leaders in their learning, following their individual developmental paths. Children are encouraged to think of themselves as 'citizens of the world'.</p>	<p>Observation assessment and planning</p> <p>Regular observations have always been the key assessment and planning tool for Montessorians. Planning relates to the Montessori areas of learning as represented by activities set out within the favourable environment and being prepared to support the children's individual development. The practitioners have schemes of work (lesson plans for all the Montessori equipment and activities available to children as part of the favourable environment). Preparation of these schemes of work is the key component of Montessori practitioner training.</p>	<p>Play and exploration</p> <p>Montessori saw the child's activity as the means of self-construction; a construction of their own personalities. The characteristics of the child's work are closely linked with what we consider today to be play:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the process, not the outcome, is the focus; ● activities are self-selected; ● adults introduce many of the materials to the children as a starting point of the child's learning; ● children have the choice of working alone and with others;

		<p>Children's choices of activities reflect their interests and sensitive periods and practitioners plan to support these.</p> <p>The organisation of the activities in the classrooms provides materials which are attractive to children as well as acting as a guide to progression from one activity to another, gradually building up their knowledge of skills, concepts and understanding of the world around them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● children have time to engage with the activities in the prepared environment. Focused and concentrated engagement in activities is encouraged; ● opportunity to repeat activities at will is of paramount importance; ● many activities have a 'control of error' which promotes exploration, experimentation and problem solving. <p>See Section 3 for further explanations of play in Montessori settings.</p>
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<p>Inclusive practice</p> <p>The uniqueness of each child, family and community is valued and respected.</p> <p>The ethos of 'children as citizens of the world' and the principle of 'following the child', with its focus on their needs, potential and progress of individuals underpins inclusive practice in Montessori classrooms.</p>	<p>Parents as partners</p> <p>Parents are acknowledged as the child's first educators and are encouraged to cooperate with the Montessori setting in supporting their children's development and learning.</p> <p>Parents are encouraged to observe their child in the setting and to contribute to any project work carried out by the school. They may also participate in parent-teacher associations established in larger nurseries and schools.</p> <p>Many Montessori schools run programmes to develop parents' understanding of how their child is developing.</p>	<p>Supporting every child</p> <p>Planning always relates to the progress of individual children and embraces the six areas of learning identified within the Montessori schemes of work. Activities are organised in small steps to offer incremental challenges within the scope of abilities of the individual child.</p>	<p>Active learning</p> <p>Children interact spontaneously with the favourable environment and focus on the development of practical skills and sensorial experiences with real objects. These activities form the foundation for all future learning and the basis of learning through exploration.</p> <p>Movement is an integral part of the learning process in Montessori classrooms. For further information about learning in Montessori classrooms please see Section 3 of this booklet.</p>
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<p>Keeping safe</p> <p>Children are vulnerable and need to be protected by adults. All Montessori providers comply with regulation regarding safeguarding children and ensuring that appropriate risk assessment is in place. Helping children to assess risk is part of the development of skills facilitated by the practical life area of the learning environment.</p>	<p>Supporting learning</p> <p>Young children cannot learn effectively until they are well settled. They are developing a relationship with themselves – mind, body and spirit. It is only when this has been achieved that they can establish positive relationships with adults and other children. This is a process which develops gradually.</p> <p>They are given time to explore and investigate their classroom, indoor and outdoor, enabling them to master their environments and, thereby, master themselves.</p> <p>Their natural rhythm of learning and their learning dispositions and interests are recognised and acknowledged.</p> <p>Children usually follow an individual learning plan based on the Montessori early years areas of learning.</p>	<p>The learning environment</p> <p>The Montessori learning environment is set out to meet all the needs of the child, starting with the activities and materials developed by Montessori herself and supplemented by activities essential for favourable development of individuals – such as unit blocks, book corners and art areas – opportunities to contribute to maintenance of the environment (practical life activities).</p> <p>Children work on their own and in small groups.</p> <p>Group activities usually have specific purposes; such as the introduction of a special project, music and movement, story-time, etc. They are the exception rather than the rule.</p> <p>Children are not required to take part in groups if they choose not to, but are encouraged if that seems sensible. Adult-led role-play is not usually seen in Montessori classrooms with the exception of role-play used to introduce children to social graces, where staff and children interact.</p>	<p>Creativity and critical thinking</p> <p>Opportunities to work alone or with friends at self-chosen activities nurture children's exploration and investigation which underpin their creativity as well as problem-solving skills and the ability to think critically. Both the activities and the adults and peers in the environment scaffold the children's thinking.</p> <p>Creativity from the basis of real-life experience is valued and supported in Montessori classrooms and was recognised by Montessori (1949) as one of the unique tendencies of the human species. Montessori pointed out that young children are in truth creative beings, creating as they do their own unique personalities.</p>
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<p>Health and well-being</p> <p>All Montessori practitioners recognise that children's physical and psychological needs must be met if they are to develop their full potential.</p>	<p>Key person</p> <p>The key person has special responsibilities for working with individual children and their families within the setting, or for recording observations and developing individual plans for specific children. In the Montessori environment, all practitioners and adults are likely to be involved in children's learning without undermining the key person's role, such is the nature of a vertically grouped setting.</p>	<p>The wider context</p> <p>Montessorians see the child as a 'Citizen of the world' and as such will help to connect him/her with the wider local and global community.</p> <p>Children are encouraged in polite considerate behaviour. The learning atmosphere should be calm and industrious. Peaceful coexistence on the planet is established as an ideal even in the setting with relevant activities, for example recycling and composting are part of the setting routine.</p>	<p>Areas of Learning and Development</p> <p>See Section 3 for information linking the EYFS six areas of learning with the six areas of learning within the Montessori learning environment.</p>
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Section 2: Early Years Foundation Stage – overview of welfare requirements

As set out in the Childcare Act 2006, all providers are required to meet the welfare requirements regardless of the type, size or funding of the setting. This section provides an overview of the requirements which need to be in place in order for the provision to be registered with Ofsted.

These requirements are designed to support providers in creating welcoming, safe and stimulating environments, where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

It is an offence for a provider:

- not to comply with certain welfare requirements;
- not to notify Ofsted of certain events identified in the welfare requirements;
- to give corporal punishment to a child.

The full details of the welfare requirements can be found in Section 3 of *The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, which is organised under the five general welfare requirement headings and not only lists the specific legal requirements but also the statutory guidance for providers. This guidance provides examples of actions providers are likely to have to take in order to meet the general and specific legal requirements; however, providers may be able to comply by using other methods, in which case they can depart from the statutory guidance if they are able to demonstrate that their alternative approach achieves the same ends.

Summary of the specific welfare requirements as set out in the *Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* document:



<p>Safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare</p>	<p>The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.</p>	<p>Safeguarding (child protection). Information and complaints. Premises and security. Outings. Equality of opportunity.</p>
	<p>The provider must promote good health of the children, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action when they are ill.</p>	<p>Medicines. Illness and injuries. Food and drink. Smoking.</p>
	<p>Children’s behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs.</p>	<p>Behaviour management (including a clear statement that corporal punishment will not be used in the setting).</p>
<p>Suitable people</p>	<p>Providers must ensure that adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.</p>	<p>Safe recruitment. List of required Ofsted notifications.</p>
	<p>Adults looking after children must have appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge.</p>	<p>Required qualifications for managers and supervisors (at level 3) and other staff (at level 3 and 2) as defined by the Children’s Workforce Development Council.</p>
	<p>Staffing arrangements must be organised to ensure safety and to meet the needs of the children.</p>	<p>Adult-child ratios as outlined in Appendix 2 (pages 49–51) of the <i>Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage</i>.</p>
<p>Suitable premises, environment and equipment</p>	<p>Outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys, must be safe and suitable for their purpose.</p>	<p>Risk assessment for both indoor and outdoor environments. Premises. Space requirements.</p>

<p>Organisation</p>	<p>Providers must plan and organise their systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.</p>	<p>Key person.</p> <p>Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.</p> <p>Provide a balance between adult-led and freely-chosen or child-initiated activities, delivered through indoor and outdoor play.</p> <p>Undertake sensitive assessment based on observations in order to plan to meet children’s individual needs.</p> <p>Plan and provide experiences which are appropriate to each child’s stage of development as they progress towards the early learning goals.</p>
<p>Documentation</p>	<p>Providers must maintain records, and have in place policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the settings and to meet the needs of the children.</p>	<p>Data for settings’ use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child’s full name and date of birth. ● Name and address of every parent or carer, focusing on the parent or carer with whom the child lives. ● Emergency contact for parents or carers. <p>Data for use by local authority and Early Years Census:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child’s full name and date of birth. ● Address. ● Gender. ● Ethnicity (optional). ● Status of SEN. ● Number of funded hours taken up during the census week. ● Total number of funded and unfunded hours taken up during the census.

Section 3: Learning and development requirements

Montessori believed that children's learning is intrinsically linked with child development and that it is not possible for children to learn until they are ready. This readiness will vary from child to child. As children mature and have access to a rich environment, supported by sensitive and knowledgeable adults, they will learn to follow their innate potential.

The Childcare Act 2006 establishes that all providers are required to meet learning and development requirements regardless of the type, size or funding of the setting. This section provides an overview of the requirements which are delivered by ensuring that children work towards meeting the early learning goals (ELG) by the end of the reception year.

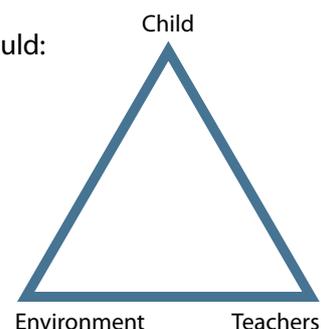
During inspections Ofsted will need to see that an educational programme is in place and children's achievements are assessed in the context of working towards the ELG. All children will be assessed against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of the reception year.

The learning and development requirements take into account the fact that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are inter-connected and are equally important in contributing towards children's development.

This area of the EYFS identifies the importance and influence that positive relationships and an enabling environment make in supporting children's learning.

The Montessori triangle of the child – environment – teachers should:

1. extend beyond the teacher and should include parents or carers and the wider community, without undermining the key role the Montessori director or directress plays in putting the child freely and independently into contact with the environment;
2. facilitate opportunities for extending the children's development and learning in and beyond the classroom.



The most significant relationship in the triangle is that between the child and the environment.

Children are active learners and learning begins from birth; therefore in the Montessori setting we always assess where each child is in their stage of development and the level of their learning when they join the setting. We aid each child to develop their personalities in a multi-faceted way, thereby enhancing their future potential and learning.

Children's needs, interests and stages of development are always considered when evaluating observations. Children's learning is facilitated by purposeful activities which are spontaneously chosen by the child as well as being adult-led and supported when appropriate. The child's autonomy is valued and respected in Montessori settings as the most creative way for a child to develop naturally, in line with their intrinsic sensitive periods of development.

The Learning and Development requirements comprise two elements: an educational programme and the early learning goals.

The educational programme facilitates the delivery of the goals as set out in the six areas of learning and is assessed primarily through observations, which also serve as means of future planning.

Montessori practitioners make links between the Montessori learning programme (schemes of work) and the ELG to ensure that their practice is transparent and assessable to parents and colleagues. They also understand that children need opportunities and encouragement to use their skills, knowledge and understanding of the world in a range of situations and for a range of purposes and need to be supported in developing their unique learning dispositions and autonomy, which are inherent in the Montessori ethos of 'following the child'.

The following table serves as an explanation of how the Montessori learning programme meets the six areas of learning. For specific examples of how the Montessori Learning Programme meets the ELG, please see Section 5 of this booklet.

Areas of learning	Montessori learning programme delivered inside and outside the classroom
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Life skills, practical life activities. Cultural activities. Ground rules, grace and courtesy. Role modelling by peers and adults. Freedom to develop positive friendships, relationships and self-confidence through independence and freedom of choice.
Communication, Language and Literacy	Freedom of speech and opportunities for dialogue. Opportunities to develop listening, communication skills and vocabulary. Story-telling and books. Pre-literacy skills with strong emphasis on phonics. Literacy activities, including development of general skills leading to writing. Language-rich environments.



Areas of learning	Montessori learning programme delivered inside and outside the classroom
Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy	<p>All areas of the learning programme give children opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning by virtue of the autonomy they are encouraged to access in the environment, in addition to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● exploration of the environment; ● sensorial education and activities including work with shapes, sizes and patterns; ● cultural activities; ● counting activities in a mathematically-rich environment.
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	<p>Cultural activities.</p> <p>Exploration and care of the environment both inside and outside.</p> <p>Peace education including social graces.</p> <p>Special topics.</p> <p>Sensorial activities.</p>
Physical Development	<p>Children develop gross and fine motor skills, a high degree of hand-eye coordination and balance through practical life activities as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● outdoor activities, including sand and water play; ● dance and gymnastics; ● health awareness; ● creative activities; ● all activities which maximise the flow and movement of each child through diverse and challenging environments.
Creative Development	<p>Individual children, small groups and occasionally the whole group engage in freely-available activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● art and craft; ● music and movement; ● drama and story-telling; ● spontaneous role play usually occurring in a practical life area, cultural area and/or during outdoor play.

The assessment arrangements as described on pages 16 and 17 of the EYFS require two types of assessment: formative assessment and the completion of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

Formative assessment – this is based upon ongoing observations of individual children during the Early Years Foundation Stage and relates to the Montessori Learning Programme (see Section 4 of this booklet for further details of planning and assessment procedures in Montessori classrooms). Consider the Look, Listen and Note section of the Practice Guidance when starting to observe and record children’s progress. These observations will provide evidence of individual children’s skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding in relation to the activities available in the individual setting and will serve as evidence for **the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile** which will have to be completed by all Montessori settings where attending children turn five during the academic year. This is a summary of the achievements the child has made during their time at nursery and contributes to the national statistics of children’s educational achievements at the age of five. The judgements that are made are moderated by the local authority. Local authority representatives are entitled to access all assessment procedures and documents relating to the completion of the Profile. Providers are required to discuss the child’s profile with parents or carers, and to prepare a summary for the parents or carers as well as providing a copy of the profile, if requested by the parents or carers. All assessment data should follow the child when they leave the setting during the academic year.

Play is the child’s work of self- construction. It is universally agreed that play is the key tool for young children’s development and learning. Montessori refers to this intrinsically motivated activity as ‘work’. Therefore, it is important that we explore what is understood by play and work in Montessori settings. We could define everything a child does naturally and spontaneously as ‘play’. Equally we could describe it as ‘intrinsic motivation’ driven by positive emotions toward self-development with a need to experience one’s own worth.

Play is a wonderful word, which conjures up a sense of freedom and joy with little sense of purpose or a goal. Montessorians consider that this demonstration of freedom and joy is just as evident whether a young child chooses to work or play. They value children’s engagement in any activity which leads the child to a deep level of engagement and concentration. This kind of play is serious and hard work for the child. It is the work of self-construction.

Children have their own agenda for development which reveals itself through every activity, whatever we call it. Offer a child a choice between ‘pretend’ cooking and ‘real’ cooking and we soon see the true nature of childhood revealed to us. Equally, all children will engage in family role-play, and gain enormous satisfaction in practicing and fulfilling the roles of their play scenarios. From the Montessori perspective, ‘play is work’ and ‘work is play’. The defining factors are freedom of choice, the exercise of will and deep engagement, which leads to concentration.

It is best defined by a four-year-old who responded to the probing question from his teacher, “So what did you do today? Did you work or play?” The boy’s response was, “Silly, I was writing!”

Recently a young Montessori practitioner defined her understanding of play in Montessori classrooms as follows: ‘Montessori gave value to play by calling it the child’s work.’



Section 4: Observation, assessment and planning

Montessori classrooms provide learning opportunities for **mixed age groups** of children, ideally from birth to the age of three and three to the age of six. In the UK we usually find nursery settings offering care and education to children from two to five years of age, with the majority being two- to four-year-olds. This vertical grouping is essential as it promotes socialisation. The emphasis is on children learning spontaneously by independently selecting activities appropriate for their learning from open shelves. The sessions of learning, uninterrupted by timetabled events or adult-led whole-group activities, are two and a half to three hours long and are called the work-cycle. During any one **work-cycle** a child will engage with a range of activities. These could include books, puzzles, exploring the Montessori learning materials, playing a game with a friend, using construction materials, painting, doing craft activities, block area, sand and water activities, singing, dancing, playing outside, having a snack or counting. The pace at which these activities are done is entirely guided by the child's own rhythm and interest. Some of the activities will be done alone and others with friends or adults.

Well-settled children have no difficulties in finding activities of interest, engaging with them, and returning them back on the shelf when finished. They are **courteous to one another, enjoy what they are doing and the atmosphere within the setting is one of harmony and industry**. To be able to assess children's progress in such an environment where the focus is on spontaneous learning, the teachers must be skilled observers, able to identify children who would benefit from a lesson or who would be better off left concentrating on an activity. They will also know the children's learning dispositions and will be able to support children's varied learning styles. Observation is and always has been the main assessment tool in Montessori settings.

All Montessorians appreciate the **legacy of observation** as manifested in Montessori's **Curve of Work**. This is one of the observational methods used by Montessorians to follow children's levels of involvement and concentration. When the curves of work are mapped against the levels of involvement and engagement as identified by the Effective Early Learning project (Pascal and Bertram, 1997) we can really appreciate the true value of spontaneous learning available to children in Montessori settings and how it contributes to sustained periods of high levels of concentration.

Observations are also recorded in the **Montessori Individual Learning Plan**. In most Montessori settings this is used as a record of children's progress. This plan shows the Montessori activities, organised by areas of learning and outlines the progressive nature of children's learning, reflected in the organisation of the classroom. The plan is developmentally organised and so charts the child's development and learning by recording when an activity was introduced. It also records the child's continued interest in and repetition of the activity and the child's level of competence, as well as exploration of the activity, reflecting application and imaginative use of the equipment, material or apparatus. Only when children are able to apply what they have learned from the materials and activities to everyday experiences and within an appropriate context, can we really say that they understand the concept, material or activity.

The Individual Learning Plan usually reflects the Montessori materials and activities available to children in the classroom. The activities are an integral part of the favourable environment prepared to meet children's developmental needs and reflect their interests as mirrored by their 'Sensitive periods'. The structured layout and organisation of the Montessori activities and materials within the areas of learning are important as all the activities are designed to build on the children's achievements in small and manageable steps, so supporting children's spontaneous learning. It is part of the Montessori teacher training to prepare lesson plans (Montessori Presentations) for all these activities available on the shelves. They are organised into folders and as such form the **Montessori schemes of work**. Therefore when looking at the materials organised on the shelves you are seeing the **Montessori Learning Programme as represented in the children's Individual Learning Plan**.

We must not see the materials available to the children in the classroom as static; they are expanded as the children grow in competence and are supplemented to reflect their interests. However, all new activities which are offered to the child should be in line with the basic principles of Montessori pedagogy. They should support the children's learning and development and facilitate independent work by providing opportunities for problem-solving and self-correction.

We emphasise the importance of learning through the senses by offering children real experiences of their environment. This is particularly appropriate for the younger children, where real experiences are accompanied by rich language. As children settle and mature they will choose to work on their own, in pairs or in small groups. Teachers may plan to introduce new activities to individual children or to a group of children. Usually the teacher will invite a child to work with him/her, or s/he will sit down with an activity which may attract a couple of children or a larger group who will have the opportunity to participate. It is not usual Montessori practice to expect all children to participate in an activity – children always have a choice.

The Individual Learning Plans are usually completed as teachers observe children working with materials. Teachers also make longer observational notes on sticky notes or in a pad which may be transcribed into the child's **Individual Record of Achievement**, a celebration of the child's life in the setting. It is good Montessori practice to make regular longer narrative observations of individual children which may be illustrated with photographs and may contribute towards the **child's learning story** as documented on the EYFS CD-ROM.

As much of the learning and development in Montessori classrooms is process-based, digital cameras are being used by both teachers and children to record their achievements. The child's Records of Achievement will include the Individual Learning Plan, anecdotal and narrative observations and analysis of the child's development and learning. The record should document a rich picture of the child's individual learning story with examples of work, photographs and other evidence of the 'voice of the child'.

In many Montessori schools parents or carers are invited to come and regularly observe their children. They also have access to the children's Records of Achievement. These records of achievement often serve as focus of discussion during parent-teacher meetings and parents are given the opportunity to contribute to them on a regular basis.

A summary of the child's achievement in a Montessori setting should be prepared and passed on to the next setting to which the child transfers, be it during the pre-school years or on entry to primary school.

All activities in the Montessori environment should be based on the principles underpinning the Montessori early years practice and linked with the principles of the EYFS as identified at the beginning of this brochure and in the EYFS 'Principles into Practice' cards.

Observations are analysed and serve as a basis for future planning for individual children as outlined above. In addition, Montessori settings may plan medium- or short-term activities as part of projects which complement and extend the Montessori activities available to the children.

All learning is evaluated in context of the set aims of the materials and activities and progression of learning relates to the Montessori Learning Programme. Practitioners are competent in explaining these aims within the context of the early learning goals.



Section 5: Examples of how Montessori settings meet the learning and development requirements

The following tables should serve as a guide and an overview of activities which might help children develop and contribute towards the achievement of the early learning goals at the end of the reception year in Montessori settings. This developmental progress is documented in the child’s Record of Achievement. It is important to note that children’s progress is recorded from the moment the child enters a setting, be it at the age of six, twelve or twenty-four months. All recorded routines, activities and games contribute towards the child’s holistic development.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to be interested, excited and motivated to learn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are helped to settle into the routines. ● Undertake accessible activities. ● Are encouraged to make choices. ● Are given an explanation of ‘how the room or classroom works’.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Select activities spontaneously. ● Are curious about new activities being undertaken by older peers and being introduced by teachers and are ready to try them. ● Contribute to discussions with teachers and other children around the nature table or in the book corner when sharing activities with the group.

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concentrate when working on a self-chosen activity. ● Are involved and take turns and when working within a group. ● Are able to listen to a story. ● Begin to participate in the 'Silence game'. ● Are able to listen to explanations .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings when appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have their responses recorded in an anecdotal format by teachers, where appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings, and be sensitive to the needs, views and feelings of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are encouraged to take part in discussions and negotiations. ● Are encouraged show their needs, views and feelings when these present themselves.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have a developing respect for their own culture and beliefs and those of other people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss and develop a growing awareness of other cultures through projects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Form good relationships with adults and peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are able to settle well in the mornings. ● Are able to share ideas, food, toys and materials with peers and adults in the nursery. ● show politeness and consideration for friends, peers and adults. ● Respond to key workers and other adults.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work as part of a group or a class, taking turns and sharing fairly, understanding that there needs to be agreed values and codes of behaviour for groups of people, including adults and children, to work together harmoniously. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are able to gradually accept the principles of sharing and caring for the classroom so that it can be used freely by everyone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand what is right, what is wrong, and why. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are able to follow the expected code of behaviour and learn about why this is important.

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider the consequences of their words and actions for themselves and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn about the consequences of their behaviour as events occur.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have a growing ability to put on a coat to go outside or to go home, to use the toilet and wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating a snack or lunch. ● Know about personal hygiene such as cleaning their teeth, brushing hair and so on.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Select and use activities and resources independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are able to use the prepared environment fully, working in all areas, alone and with friends.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, that need to be treated with respect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take part in discussions during circle time, but also as incidents occur in the nursery. ● Learn to put activities away so that they are ready for others. ● Undertake project work on festivals, people and animals of the world.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand that they can expect others to treat their needs, views, cultures and beliefs with respect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have teachers who are role models. ● Show respect for each others' work. ● Show general respect and polite behaviour towards each other.

Communication, Language and Literacy

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interact with others, negotiating plans and activities and taking turns in conversation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are encouraged to express their ideas and contribute to conversations. ● Participate in sharing of ideas and experiences in the book corner and art area. ● Can choose to play group games such as animal lotto. ● Can participate in block play, role-play and outdoor play.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enjoy listening to and using spoken and written language, and readily turn to it in their play and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share books either on one-to-one basis or in a group. ● Listen to guidance on how to use materials, participate in cooking and other activities. ● Have extensive one-to-one conversations with each other and adults.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustain attentive listening, responding to what they have heard with relevant comments, questions or actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in story time, during group activities, engage in attentive listening. ● Listen to instructions given by adults. ● Participate in the 'Silence game'. ● Participate in 'I Spy' and 'Odd One Out'. ● Respond to science experiments and observations of the environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen with enjoyment and respond to stories, songs and other music, rhymes and poems and make up their own stories, songs, rhymes and poems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate and enjoy listening to stories. Freedom of choice encourages enjoyment and creative use of language during book reading, role-play and music time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extend their vocabulary, exploring the meanings and sounds of new words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are given three-period lessons to extend their vocabulary. ● Have group time, story time, make books and work with books on the project table. ● Name objects in the environment and projects.

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control and show awareness of the listener. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate during group time, converse at snack time and at the beginning of the day. ● Are polite role-models and have expectations of polite behaviour from each other. ● Use language to negotiate 'what they would like or need'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have a 'farm area', 'hospital' or any other small world play. ● Undertake spontaneous role-play and play outdoors. ● Play with dinosaurs and other animals. ● Use language and comment on what they observe and create.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have block play, practical life, sensorial and role-play areas. ● Negotiate during spontaneously-chosen activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hear and say sounds in words in the order in which they occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in games such as 'I Spy' and 'Odd One Out'. ● Build words with a large movable alphabet.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can recognise the letters of the alphabet and the sound they make. ● Recognise their own and other children's names by the initials. ● Use the letter tray and letters made of sandpaper, and play 'I Spy' games.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use word building to blend and segment with large movable alphabet. ● Write titles on artwork and make books and write their own ideas in them.

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore and experiment with sounds, words, and text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Play rhyming and alliteration games. ● Label objects, own work and make books
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Retell narratives in the correct sequence, drawing on the language patterns of stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use puppets and props to retell stories. ● Follow up on a story started by someone else.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Label objects and read the labels. ● Read labels in the classroom and children's names. ● Read word lists, phrase and sentence strips.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Know that print carries meaning and, in English, is read from left to right and top to bottom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use and care for books competently and appropriately. ● Enjoy using books and share them with others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show understanding of elements of stories, such as main character, sequence of events and openings, and how information can be found in non-fiction texts to answer questions about where, who, why and how. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are encouraged to make up stories with the help of objects. ● Are encouraged to 'write' stories with the help of pictures or objects found in the environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attempt writing for different purposes, using features of different forms such as lists, stories and instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the writing area. ● Are encouraged in emergent writing using phonic knowledge. ● Write as part of role-play for a purpose. ● Record observations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write their own names and other things such as labels and captions and begin to write simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write their own name on paintings and in workbooks. ● Annotate paintings and drawings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are introduced to Insets for design, have access to paints and the craft area and are encouraged to form letters by feeling sandpaper letter shapes.

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Say and use number names in order in a familiar context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Join in rhymes, use counting books and count, for example, the number of children present, days of the week, spoons of ingredients when cooking.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Count reliably up to ten everyday objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Count number rods, pegs, spindles, counters and other objects in the environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognise numerals 1 to 9. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use sandpaper numerals and a spindle box, number cards, the birthday display and calendar.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Play the snake game to make number bonds of ten, play dominoes and make symmetrical, regular and irregular structures. ● Are helped to find out what happens if objects are organised in pairs or sets, or taken away. ● Explore sensorial materials.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In practical activities and discussions, begin to use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are introduced to the concept of addition and subtraction within everyday activities in the classroom, such as artwork and building with blocks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use language such as 'more' or 'less' to compare two numbers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Count the number of spoons, raisins or biscuits taken at snack time or lunchtime and count in the context of everyday activities such as group time or going outside. ● Are introduced to the appropriate language in the context of everyday activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Find one more or one less than a number from one to ten. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a number line, short bead stairs and the addition and subtraction strip board to count and explore numbers.

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin to relate addition to combining two groups of objects and subtraction to 'taking away'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are introduced to the snake game and addition and subtraction with short bead stairs. ● Use counting during role-play such as 'Shop'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use language such as 'greater', 'smaller', 'heavier', or 'lighter' to compare quantities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use all sensorial activities, especially the geometric solid, the geometric cabinet and the binomial and trinomial cubes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use language such as 'circle' or 'bigger' to describe the shape and size of solids and flat shapes. ● Use everyday words to describe position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use geometric solids, the geometric cabinet and binomial and trinomial cubes. ● Play mapping games and play with blocks. ● Play outdoor games in the playground during music and movement activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepare for group activities such as cooking, measuring, role-play and 'organising the farm' or any 'small world' play. ● Use a variety of materials to explore patterns, tessellations, 'tap-tap it' and pegs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk about, recognise and recreate simple patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of tessellations and constructive triangles and materials such as collage in the art area.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigate objects and materials by using all of their senses as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in project work. ● Investigate the nature table displays, gardening and plant activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Find out about, and identify, some features of living things, objects and events they observe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in project work. ● Have discussions in relation to activities available in the cultural area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observe nature. ● Find out about life cycles and the needs of plants and people. ● Learn about the consequences of science activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask questions about why things happen and how things work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have opportunities for asking questions which relate to displays on the nature table and to individual and group work with activities presented within projects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build and construct with a wide range of objects, selecting appropriate resources, and adapting their work where necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use block play and the Roman Arch. ● Use craft activities. ● Use carpentry. ● Try cookery.
<p>Select the tools and techniques they need to shape, assemble and join materials with which they are working.</p>	<p>Have access to a craft area that is always set up with a wide range of resources, both for art and craft and for making of objects.</p>

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Find out about and identify the uses of everyday technology and use information and communication technology and programmable toys to support their learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have use of a tape recorder and story tapes. ● Have use of a typewriter, digital camera, etc. ● Have use of a telephone. ● Are introduced to a programmable toy such as Pixi. ● Use technology such as mixers, beaters, hammers and screwdrivers for cooking and for repairs. ● May have access to appropriate software on the computer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Find out about past and present events in their lives and in those of their families and other people they know. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss what is important to them. ● Discuss the daily routine as presented with the calendar. ● Discuss life-cycles and make timelines. ● Explore photographs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observe, find out about and identify features in the place they live and the natural world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observe and explore the garden. ● Talk about their town, village and where things are, and the places we use and visit such as supermarkets, the library, the museum, train or bus station.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Find out about their environment and talk about those features they like and dislike. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss the walks such as to the library or playground. ● Make up mapping games relevant to the local environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin to know about their own culture and beliefs and those of other people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Celebrate birthdays and festivals. ● Ensure the environment is inclusive of all children.

Physical development

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Move with confidence, imagination and in safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in music and movement. ● Use outdoor equipment in the garden or regularly visit the playground.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Move with control and coordination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do yoga or play 'Who's Afraid of Mr Wolf'. ● Participate in the circle game. ● Use bicycles, tunnels and obstacle courses. ● Use the snack and art areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use bicycles and the tunnel for climbing and crawling. ● Dance. ● Play walk-on-the-line games. ● Use the climbing apparatus and balance beams.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show awareness of space, of themselves and of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the classroom and outdoor space during free play. ● Move with respect for others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognise the importance of keeping healthy and those things that contribute to this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are offered healthy snacks. ● Talk about food during lunchtime. ● Do project work on food and its benefits.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do project work on how our body works, what it does, what makes it healthy and who helps us to keep it healthy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a range of small and large equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the Practical life and outdoor areas to do gardening, carpentry, art activities and cooking.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the Practical life materials. ● Use the art and craft area. ● Use carpentry sets and other materials.

Creative Development

Early learning goals as identified in the statutory guidance	Examples of Montessori practice
Children should:	Children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have opportunities to make stories, draw, paint, sing songs and dance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings by using a widening range of materials, suitable tools, imaginative and role-play, movement, designing and making, and a variety of songs and musical instruments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings through drawing, painting, using a range of crafts and by dancing, singing, making up of stories and poems. ● Participate in spontaneous role-play. ● Are encouraged to think creatively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore sensorial activities. ● Participate in a range of art and craft activities. ● Play with blocks. ● Do spontaneous and planned activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognise and explore how sounds can be changed, sing simple songs from memory, recognise repeated sounds and sound patterns and match movement to music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in organised and spontaneous singing. ● Participate in music and movement sessions. ● Play music games. ● Have access to musical instruments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use their imagination in art and design, music, dance, imaginative and role-play and stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have free expression in art and craft activities. ● Dance to music. ● Participate in organised and spontaneous role-play. ● Use prepared and spontaneously-chosen props. ● Listen to story-telling that is linked to painting. ● Make up stories during practical life activities, when block building, playing with the farm, dolls house or hospital or during dressing up and when in the garden.

Based on information in Isaacs (2007)

Section 6: Acknowledgements, useful addresses and further reading

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Montessori organisations:

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21 Vineyard Hill, Wimbledon, London SW19 7JL www.montessorieducationuk.org

Montessori Schools Association

18 Balderton Street, London W1K 6TG, www.montessori.org.uk

Montessori St. Nicholas Charitable Trust

18 Balderton Street, London W1K 6TG, www.montessori.org.uk

Montessori Society (AMI) UK

26 Lyndhurst Gardens, London, NW3 5NW, www.montessori-uk.org

Montessori training colleges

Bournemouth Montessori Centre

Lansdowne Road, Bournemouth, BH1 1RP www.bournemouthmontessori.co.uk

Kent and Sussex Montessori College

Hoath Hall, Chiddingstone Hoath, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7DD, www.montessoricentre.com

Maria Montessori Institute,

26 Lyndhurst Gardens, London NW3 5NW, www.mariamontessori.org

Montessori Centre International,

18 Balderton Street, London W1K 6TG, www.montessori.uk.com

Montessori Partnership

www.montessoripartnership.com

Montessori College Wimbledon

100 Wimbledon Hill Road, London SW19 7PB, www.montessoricollegewimbledon.co.uk

Further reading

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