

Welcome to Waterfront Montessori

Dear Parent,

As parents, choosing a school for our child is one of the biggest decisions we have to make. We have so little information with which to make it, and the more we learn, the more confusing it becomes. Which philosophy of education? Which curriculum? What will the world be like when my child grows up? What skills will my child need? Will going this route help or hinder my child? What is best?

When I tell people what motivated me to start and now run the school, I tell them that I am first and foremost a parent. Like you. I am not a Montessorian, nor an educator, nor an entrepreneur. Like each of you, I simply want what is best for my child. The two bored and unhappy days my son spent in a traditional academic preschool after a year of Montessori preschool made it crystal clear to me that Montessori education was special, and that, if that was what I wanted for my child, I was going to have to do it myself. After that, the addition of the elementary school was inevitable: With the extraordinary outcomes we saw in our children by Kindergarten, why would we enroll them in anything else?

Many years of research later, I remain committed to Montessori. The more I read, the more I learn about current thinking in education, current thinking in what our world will be, and current thinking in 21st century skills, the more admiration I have for Maria Montessori and her method. More than 100 years later, through scientific study and testing, we are coming to many of the same conclusions about child development, childhood intelligence, learning and ways to foster growth that Montessori came to through observation. She gave us an educational system that nurtures independence, critical thinking, integrative acquisition and creative disposition of information. It trains thinkers, it trains leaders and above all, it gives us children whose joy in learning makes us yearn to be able to start school all over again. Moving toward a full International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program beginning in Sixth Grade does not change what it is we do: It simply gives us a formal framework in which to do what we expect will be our best Montessori work to date.

Whether or not the Montessori education my son has been getting is the “right” education, truly, I do not know. I only know that, so far, the results are far beyond what even I expected. I never cease to be astonished by what my son has learned and to marvel at what I see he might become. I regrettably cannot claim the credit as a parent: I’ve been working too hard at building the vehicle of his education. So, I must attribute it to his school, where every one of his classmates is just as extraordinary.

Thank you for your interest in Waterfront Montessori. We are delighted to share what we have learned with you. You are the most important resource in your child’s ongoing learning adventure. Please let us know how we can help!

Sincerely,



Karen Westman
Mother of Hank, Upper Elementary Student
Founder and Head of Waterfront Montessori

Our Philosophy

Waterfront Montessori is a parent-founded, parent-run school. Our philosophy and curriculum reflect the beliefs we've developed as a result of observing and nurturing our own children:

- We believe that each child is a unique and extraordinary individual with his or her own set of gifts, interests and needs.
- We believe that if we encourage the natural curiosity of the child, the child will develop confidence in his or her ability to master any subject or skill.
- We believe that if we respect and nurture what is already within each child, the child will have the opportunity to become everything he or she can be.

Our primary goal is to foster a love of learning that a child will carry throughout his or her life. By creating our vision of the best possible school for our own children, we believe that we can provide an extraordinary learning environment for yours.

We chose to be a Montessori school because the Montessori philosophy was most closely aligned to what we wanted for our own children. Maria Montessori believed that within each child lie the seeds of who the child will become as an adult. It is the maximization of that potential that represents the core of Montessori philosophy. Respect for the whole child, the child's curiosity and eagerness to learn, and the child's capacity to develop self-reliance and independent critical thinking skills in the cooperative social context each child needs to effectively learn, are the Montessori hallmarks.

The Montessori environment is designed to foster the cognitive, sensory, motor and social development reflected in each stage of child development. It is prepared with materials that invite children to engage in learning activities of their own choice. Under the gentle guidance of a trained teacher, children in a Montessori classroom learn by making discoveries with the materials, cultivating concentration, motivation, and self-discipline. The multi-age classrooms provide a social context for experiencing school life within a continuum. Children learn from each other and, often, because of each other. Younger children get a view of what lies ahead and older students strengthen their skills by helping and mentoring their younger classmates.

Montessori children learn to take responsibility for themselves. They learn to get along with children of different ages and abilities, to respect each other's work and workspace, and to treat everyone with courtesy. They play an active part in maintaining the classroom's physical order. Responsibility and respect for the materials in use become a part of the daily routine. Children progress at a their own pace, one that suits their internal rhythms and readiness for the next level. The child is given the time and latitude to embark on a self-fulfilling cycle of achievement, developing self-confidence and self-worth through the process. Learning becomes a joyful experience, and the distinctions between work and play become blurred.

We value these qualities for our children. It is our gift to them, our contribution to a strong foundation for personal growth and the sense of community that they can carry through to their adult lives.

Our History

Waterfront Montessori was founded in 2003 when a group of Jersey City mothers who were frustrated by both the limited educational options and the lack of enrichment activities for their children close to home decided to take matters into their own hands.

We set out to create what we did want in a school: A place where our children could get an exceptional education; a place where the activities we wanted for them – art, music, theater, foreign languages, movement – were either part of the curriculum or otherwise offered; a place with talented and highly qualified teachers who would guide our children; and, a place in which we were confident our children would be as well off, if not better off, than in our care.

We set out to create what is now Waterfront Montessori -- a parent-run school with strong community ties and a drive to achieve the highest educational standards for each and every child -- including our own.

Our Diversity

We consider ourselves fortunate to be located in a neighborhood with extraordinary diversity of ethnicity, culture and national origin, and our school reflects that diversity. Our goal is to embrace and to encourage it, and to celebrate it in the many ways that are open to us.

Montessori education is universal education. It teaches us all that we are members of the human family, a vast community inhabiting the common space of our planet in a larger universe. It teaches us to come together as a community, part of the web of the larger social fabric, with each one of us having a stake in and a responsibility for ourselves, our community, our society and our world.

The Montessori Curriculum

The Montessori curriculum is unique. It is both directed and child-centric. It couples structure with free choice. It seeks to provide for each child precisely the environment and tools a child most needs at each stage of a child's development. It produces children who are centered, self-confident, and focused on whatever their interest takes them to.

From the day they are born, children are actively engaged in absorbing everything they can from everything around them. Montessori education simply and unobtrusively takes advantage of and extends this innate drive to learn into the child's school years. Every part of every program -- whether it is the construction of the classroom, the materials presented, the form in which they are presented, or the choices children are given -- is a product of Montessori's observation of children and a desire to produce a learning context consistent with their needs.

The Montessori Curriculum (cont'd)

Structure in Montessori education arises from the structure of the Montessori classroom, which is a prepared environment unlike any other educational environment. It is first and foremost the child's environment: There is a deliberate absence of any overt adult presence in the classroom, be it furniture, desks, storage or creature comforts. Adults are guests: They bend down to speak to the children at the children's own level; they sit in child-sized chairs or on the floor; they use mats on which to work; they use the same materials and implements the children use.

Each detail in each classroom is, with careful and rigorous thought, deliberately chosen for the age and developmental level to which it is addressed. Toddler furniture, for instance, is lower to the ground than preschool furniture, which in turn is smaller than furniture in the Elementary classrooms. Toddler materials are focused on sensory development and gross motor skills. Preschool materials focus on refining fine motor skills and laying the foundation for the academic disciplines. Elementary materials are increasingly academic in nature, consistent with the child's emerging ability to handle abstract concepts.

Teachers in Montessori classrooms are guides and facilitators, not instructors. Montessori teachers wander among a classroom of children who, although unaware of it, are actively engaged in self-directed learning. Lessons are taught individually or in small groups. Children are allowed to follow their interests and proceed at their own pace; it is the teacher's job to notice when the child is ready for more and to introduce the next steps to the child at that time. Children are able to take ownership for their learning and skill development, to become excited with every further piece of knowledge and know-how.

In a Montessori classroom, children choose their work. Even as children choose, however, there are built-in limits to their choice: We provide them with an environment in which every choice is a wise choice; they cannot choose to do nothing; and, sometimes their choice must be limited to choosing to put on their right shoe first, or their left, or choosing one math work over another.

The Montessori preschool curriculum introduces the child to writing, reading, arithmetic, science, geography and other academic skills. It helps the child develop auditory, visual and other sensory discrimination. It assists the child to develop practical life skills, encouraging the child to become independent.

The Montessori grade school curriculum offers the child the opportunity to explore the larger world. It builds on the child's academic foundation and nurtures the child's nascent abilities in abstract and critical thinking. It continues to encourage each child's unique development while fostering the ability to work and learn as a group.

Our Montessori academic curriculum is enriched with fine art, musical training, movement and physical education, and foreign languages. These too are not random: They are introduced in their historic and cultural contexts and follow the same path from the concrete to the abstract as the other academic disciplines. We believe that the earlier these activities are introduced, the more likely the child is to carry the skills and appreciation of them into his or her adult years.

Our Programs

The Toddler Program

The Toddler program, for children ages 2 to 3, is designed to assist the child in taking important first steps away from home into a nurturing, supportive and stimulating school environment. Children develop independence and respect for others, as well as acquire sensory, motor, practical life, language, pre-reading and pre-math skills. Within the Toddler Room, the toddler-sized furniture, as well as the specially designed Montessori materials for this age group, provide an environment young children can explore with a sense of mastery.

The Primary Program

The Primary Program, which encompasses Pre-K3 and Pre-K4, is a traditional Montessori program in which language and language skill, writing and reading, mathematics, science, geography and culture are the subject areas. The child is encouraged to become increasingly independent and to become an active participant in the learning process. The Montessori materials within the prepared environment allow each student to progress at his or her own pace. Lessons are given individually or in small groups in an atmosphere of cooperation and non-competitiveness. Older children provide models for younger children and, through the work they do, provide younger children with examples of accomplishment to which to aspire.

It is in the Primary classroom that children become the centered, motivated, focused learners that they will be for the rest of their lives. Maria Montessori called this process “normalization”: She believed that the natural (or “normal”) state of children is that of an eager learner. Through observation and experimentation, she developed an early childhood program and curriculum that maintains and encourages this state. Modern educational research supports Montessori’s work: A learning environment that provides order, encourages exploration, permits movement, encourages choice, allows for pursuit of interests, provides manipulatives for learning, avoids extrinsic rewards and is socially interactive provides superior educational outcomes.

The Kindergarten Program

The Kindergarten Program, for children ages 5 to 6, is both an extension of the Primary Program and a transition to the Elementary Program. In keeping with the traditional Montessori model, children in the Kindergarten Program and the Primary Program share classroom space, a model that offers the Kindergarten children a chance to reinforce their mastery of subject areas by assisting the younger children. For half of each day, however, Kindergarteners occupy their own classroom to pursue more advanced activities in all subject areas. The child refines his or her writing skills, progresses from addition and subtraction to multiplication and division, and moves from simple reading to more complex material, all at the child’s own pace and in keeping with the child’s interests. Storytelling, art, music, drama, foreign language and movement have been integrated into the curriculum to provide for a richer learning experience where creativity and self-expression are encouraged and valued along with academic success, and having fun can be equated with school and learning.

Our Programs (cont'd)

The Elementary Program

(Grades 1 – 5)

The Elementary Program continues the processes of the Primary and Kindergarten Programs, building upon them to adapt to the changing developmental needs of the child. The elementary-aged child is evolving from a concrete thinker to more abstract thought. It is an age of wonder, where questions of why and how things in the world work come into focus. It is a time when the task of the teacher is to guide each student in his or her own search for these answers. The basic skills acquired in the early years are polished, but now in the context of the greater world.

Elementary students are introduced to the world at large through a curriculum of the sciences, computers and technology, mathematics, literacy and literature, social sciences, history, world geography and civics. All subject matter is presented in an integrated manner, emphasizing the inter-relatedness of all learning. Art, music, poetry, theatre, movement, foreign language and physical activity lend vitality to the curriculum and excitement to the Elementary students' day.

The Elementary Program is as much about leading students to the many avenues that will provide them with the tools to find answers to their own questions as it is about leading them to the answers themselves. Student inquiries lead the way from library, internet, scientific and/or social research to written and oral exposition. Along the way, students refine their reading skills, expand their studies of vocabulary, grammar and sentence analysis, work on data analysis, exercise critical thinking and delve into creative and expository writing in a context that is meaningful to the student rather than an end unto itself.

The Elementary classrooms continue the multi-aged setting that provides children with opportunities for broad social development. Friendships developed in this setting have depth. Children make an effort to get along, as they know they will be together for several years. The presence of a wide range of ages and abilities builds in each child a tolerance for people's differences and appreciation for their commonalities. The multi-age setting enhances learning as younger students learn from the older ones, and older students reinforce their learning by providing leadership and assistance to their younger classmates.

The Elementary program continues the Montessori tradition of cooperative learning while allowing each child to progress at his or her own pace. In addition to providing a balanced curriculum, we nurture the ability in each child to solve problems and think critically in his or her quest for knowledge of the world at large.

The Middle School Program

(Grades 6 - 8)

The Middle School Program blends our dynamic Montessori curriculum into the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB MYP).

Life in the 21st century places many changing demands on students making the transition through adolescence. At this age, our students are at a crucial period of personal, social, physical and intellectual development, at a time of uncertainty and of questioning. The IB Middle Years Program is

The Middle School Program, continued

designed to help them find a sense of belonging in the ever-changing and increasingly interrelated world around them and to nurture their curiosity and eagerness to learn.

The IB Middle Years Program provides a structure of academic challenge that encourages our Middle School students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, helping them become critical and reflective thinkers.

The curriculum, consisting of eight related subject groups and five areas of interaction, focuses on learning across subjects and disciplines. Students are required to study two languages, sciences, mathematics, humanities, arts, physical education and technology. They also work through Eighth Grade to create and carry out a project of their own. Under the guidance of our faculty, this independent project is an apt culmination to their time at Waterfront Montessori.

Combining the complementary Montessori and IB teaching methodologies takes advantage of what we work so hard to create throughout our school – *a lifelong love of learning*. The IB MYP encourages this by challenging our students to solve problems, show creativity and resourcefulness and participate actively in the community with self-motivation, compassion and leadership.

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program at Waterfront Montessori:

Waterfront Montessori has applied as a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program. Our mission is to provide the highest caliber of well-rounded global education for children from all over the world and from all walks of life. Our goal is to nurture independence, creativity, critical thinking and leadership, and to foster the development of a love of learning the children will carry with them throughout their lives.

As part of this mission to educate students for the 21st Century, Waterfront Montessori has applied as a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program and is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. These are schools that share a common philosophy – a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that Waterfront Montessori believes is important for today's students.

Only schools authorized by the IB organization can offer any of its three academic programs: the Primary Years Program (PYP), the Middle Years Program (MYP), or the Diploma Program. Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted.

Other Programs

Early and Extended Hours

Early Hours, beginning at 7:30 a.m., are available to all children registered in programs that include morning classes at the school. Extended Hours, until 6:00 p.m., are available to children in all programs on a pre-registered or as needed (space permitting) basis, provided they are already in school during the afternoon. In the afternoon, children will participate in the activities of the appropriate afternoon Program classes. During Extended Hours, children will be offered a variety of activities ranging from traditional Montessori activities to participating in an age-appropriate After School Program class.

Extended Day Registration

Children who are registered at the school for the entire day to 6 p.m. have limited opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities that will allow them to fully explore their own interests and gifts. We therefore automatically enroll children already registered in the Extended Day academic program in many of the activities offered in the After School program without additional charge to the parents. Individual music lessons and group music and theory must be registered for and paid for separately. Certain activities -- ballet and karate, for instance, because they are so quick to fill with both our own and outside students -- require of Extended Day students only a commitment to participation and appropriate garb.

The AfterSchool Program

We believe that a child's education should include activities that teach skills and develop aspects of the child's abilities that the child may not have the opportunity to fully exercise in the classroom. We believe that the earlier the child is exposed to these activities, the more likely the child is to embrace them later in life. The AfterSchool Program is designed to provide children between the ages of three and twelve with an outlet for his or her artistic and/or physical gifts.

Among our AfterSchool offerings are:

- Individual Piano Lessons
- Individual Violin Lessons
- Group Music Theory and Performance classes
- Choir
- Ballet
- Yoga
- Chess
- Poetry
- Karate and Karate Forms (Kata)

The AfterSchool Program is open to all children between the ages of three and twelve regardless of whether they attend the school or not.

Our School

Waterfront Montessori is located on a quiet cul-de-sac in the historic downtown Paulus Hook neighborhood of Jersey City. The school is on the street level of a waterfront residential high-rise and now spans most of its block on Warren Street between Dudley Street and the water of Liberty Harbor.

In the Montessori tradition, we feature spacious, open rooms designed with Montessori materials situated around the perimeter within easy reach of the children. This allows our students plenty of room for free exploration, as well as ample space to engage in concentrated learning on floor mats or at small tables.

The Toddler students (2 to 3 year olds) have their own classroom with a large sunny window, toddler-appropriate materials and toddler-height furniture, and a digital piano for in-class music.

Our Primary students (3 to 6 year olds, including Kindergarteners) learn and explore in two large ground floor classrooms and a smaller Kindergarten classroom. Classrooms have both carpeted areas for floor work and wet areas that offer an ideal environment to learn practical life skills as well as in which to eat snack and lunch.

Our Elementary classrooms are of the same physical design as our Primary classrooms and house small libraries and computer areas. The Elementary School will expand to a new site in Fall 2010.

Our large, natural outdoor play area is securely fenced and has soft grass, plentiful shade, lots of sun and several benches. We have a variety of age appropriate outdoor toys and an outdoor storage area to house them. With the exception of severe weather days, outdoor play and recreation are a daily event.

Safety is a priority at Waterfront Montessori: All entrances and exits to the school are locked from the outside. Chimes sound at the opening of each door to alert staff to all comings and goings. Our premises are also under video and audio surveillance, twenty-four hours a day.

All of these features combine to make Waterfront Montessori a stimulating, safe, nurturing and beautiful environment for the early steps of your child's educational journey.

Waterfront Montessori is a full member school of the American Montessori Society and the International Montessori Council.

Admissions

Admissions are granted with priority given as follows:

1. Current students.
2. Siblings of current students. (*Siblings must be concurrently enrolled for priority to apply to a sibling.*)
3. Returning former students.
4. Transferring Montessori students.
5. Children of Montessori parents.
6. Other new students.

A space on the waiting list (for 2 year olds), for the lottery (for 3 and 4 year olds) or for an interview (for 5 year olds and older) can only be reserved once an application fee or, in the case of re-enrolling students, a tuition deposit, has been received. Tuition deposits must be received by their due dates in order for a space in a program to be reserved.

In keeping with our non-discriminatory philosophy, no interviews are required prior to September admission for toddlers (age 2 to 3) from our waitlist or preschoolers (ages 3 and 4) accepted by lottery, or who are siblings.

Admission for Toddlers (Age 2 by September 1): The school currently accepts applications year-round for the Toddler class and maintains a waitlist in order of the date the application and accompanying application fee were received. Toddler admissions are made on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to the priorities above and the gender balance of the class. Toddlers must be two years old by September 1 to be considered for Fall admission. Toddlers who turn three while on the waitlist will be included in the next applicable lottery for spaces in the Primary Program.

Admission for Primary Students (Age 3 or 4 by September 1): Applications for preschool admission for the following Fall will be accepted from the day after Labor Day until December 31st of the current year. Admission to the Primary Program will be by lottery, which will be conducted each March. Offers of admission will be made in March.

Kindergarten Admission (Age 5 by September 1): Incoming Kindergarteners will be admitted via a school visit and interview process. Parents will be invited to tour the school and to meet with an administrator. Prospective Kindergarten students will have a one-on-one interview with a teacher and/or may be invited to join a class for a minimum of a half-day for observation prior to acceptance. Incoming students must be five years old prior to September 1 for consideration for admission to Kindergarten. Parents will be notified of their child's admission status by the first week in March.

Elementary & Middle School Admission (Age 6 by September 1 for Grade 1): Prospective Elementary students without prior Montessori education will be admitted via a school visit and interview process. Applicants must spend at least one full day in a classroom in order to be considered.

Transferring Montessori Students: Transferring Montessori students will be admitted year-round on a first-come, first-served basis provided there is space available. Children must spend a minimum of a half day in the appropriate classroom prior to admission and the child's prior school will be required to provide documentation of enrollment. Parents of students who are transferring from another Montessori program should call the school's office at (201) 333-5600 to make arrangements for a classroom visit for their child.

2009/2010 Academic Year Tuition Schedule^{v.2}

TODDLER PROGRAMS	(24 mos. – 36 mos.)	Per Academic Year[#]
5-Day a.m. Only	8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	\$ 10,400
Full Day	8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.	\$ 18,800
Extended Day	7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Add \$4,200
PRIMARY PROGRAMS	(Pre-K3 and Pre-K4)	Per Academic Year[#]
5-Day a.m. Only	8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	\$ 9,400
Full Day	8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.	\$ 16,800
Extended Day*	7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Add \$4,200
ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS	Full Day Only	Per Academic Year[#]
Kindergarten	8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.	\$ 14,800
Elementary Gr. 1 - 5	8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.	\$ 14,800
Extended Day*	7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Add \$4,200
BEFORE SCHOOL CARE	7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	No charge
EXTRA AFTERNOONS	11:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.	\$ 50 per day
AFTER SCHOOL CARE	3:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	\$ 10 per hour

*Extended Day Primary and Elementary students are automatically enrolled in most AfterSchool offerings at no extra charge.

[#]Parents should note that Waterfront Montessori requires a commitment from the parents for the entire academic school year from September to June. There will be no reduction for absences, holidays or partial months.

A 5% discount will be applied to each tuition if more than one sibling is enrolled.

FEES:

Initial Application Fee (non-refundable^{}):** \$75

Tuition Deposit (non-refundable^{}):** \$1,500

Materials Fee^{}:** *Preschool:* Half day students \$150, Full & Extended day students \$300
Kindergarten & Elementary: \$400

Mandatory Tuition Insurance Fee: 1.76% of Base Tuition

New Family Fee^{}:** \$1,000 one-time fee upon initial admission of a family member.

****Parents should note that the Application Fee, Tuition Deposit, Tuition Insurance, Materials Fee and New Family Fee are not refundable. The Tuition Deposit is not due until we have made a formal offer of admission to a child. We expect parents to make a serious commitment to the school at that point, of which the tuition deposit amount is evidence.**

PAYMENT PLANS: The school offers semi-annual, quarterly and monthly tuition plans to parents through Tuition Management Systems (TMS). All costs associated with enrolling in these plans are the responsibility of the parent. Enrollment in one of these plans is required for any extended payment plan.