

The Kindergarten Year By Julie Warren

The Kindergarten year is an exciting year of learning and leadership. Here at Montessori we continue to help the child develop skills in an individual manner. By “following the child” we meet (and often exceed) the Illinois Kindergarten standards.

In our morning classrooms we continue with individualized learning in a **comfortable environment**. The kindergarten year is when it all comes together. The blending of sounds becomes the joy of reading and writing. Counting from the previous year set the foundation for wonderfully interesting lessons involving the four operations of arithmetic. Mathematical concepts are clearly presented, freely practiced, and permanently internalized.

During that third year, your child may show an interest in a specific area. Some want to learn more about magnets, bridges, flags, music, etc. We allow time for **personal exploration**. We want each kindergartner to enjoy being five and prepare for becoming six!

Your child will learn to make new friends with old friends nearby. Each year, 2/3 of the Montessori classroom remains the same. Kindergartners have become the “oldest” and are learning to develop good leadership skills. Even if they are the youngest in your family at home, they will get to be a **leader** here at Montessori!

How is our afternoon program different than the morning program? We prepare the children for any first grade they may enter. In our afternoon class the children are exposed to more group discussions and cooperative works. Because they work on their language and math in the morning, we can dive into some exciting areas of interest in the afternoon. The children learn about The United States of America, the history of our world, our bodies, the orchestra, and nutrition. Before lunch each day we spend 10-15 minutes learning Spanish or Sign Language.

Sometimes we need to discuss an issue that might be of concern to a child. If needed we can put Spanish on hold for one day in order to discuss a **social issue** that might have come up. We want to meet all the needs of the child. This way our children are more fully prepared for first grade. Our goal is to help the child grow SOCIALLY, EMOTIONALLY, and ACADEMICALLY.

Remember that our school is designed as a three- year program. It

has a beginning, middle, and an end. It ends after the third year as the child begins to enter a new plane of development. Please see “The Three Year Cycle” to learn more about planes of development.

We are blessed with an amazing staff of Montessori **teachers**. Your child has the advantage of returning to the same teacher they have had the past two years. That teacher not only knows your child’s level in reading and math, but also your child’s learning style. The work of the Montessori teacher is to support, assist, encourage, and love the children enough to remember what is written across the forehead of every little child: “Help me to do it all by myself!”

Carefully consider the advantages your child will have going out into the world having built a good foundation. **After three years at Montessori your child will leave with an excitement toward learning, a good sense of self-esteem, and increased leadership skills.**