



Bright Horizons Educational Programs: Comparing Montessori and Progressive Methods

The education and development of your child is of the utmost importance to any parent. You want the very best learning experiences for your child, as well as educators who can provide the encouragement and inspiration to guide your child to approach the world with confidence and success.

Exceptional, developmentally appropriate, enriching education comes in many forms. Determining what educational environment is right for your child is important. To help you make the best decision for your family, we have created the following comparison of both types of educational programs offered by Bright Horizons. This can help you understand the similarities and differences between the approaches to help guide your decision. It's also a good idea to visit a few schools to see for yourself which environment is right for you and your family.

Montessori Approach	Progressive Approach
The Child's Experience	
Child is viewed holistically, valuing cognitive, psychological, social, and spiritual development.	Child is viewed holistically, valuing cognitive, social, self, physical, and creative development.
Three-year mixed-age groupings.	Same-age groupings or mixed-age groupings.
Children proceed through an organized, sequenced curriculum that refines individual skills. Cultural subjects such as science, history, and geography are organized according to the age and interest of the child.	Children choose from activities and projects that teachers have prepared based on children's needs, skill development areas, and interests.
Children spot own errors through feedback from the self-correcting materials; errors are viewed as part of the learning process.	Child may spontaneously spot own errors or find through open-ended questions from the teachers; errors are viewed as part of the learning process.
Mastery of a skill is checked before the next skill in the sequence is introduced.	Specific mastery of one skill is not required prior to experimentation at the next level.
Collaboration and peer help is emphasized.	Peer collaboration and teamwork is emphasized.
Courtesy and conflict resolution are integral parts of the Montessori peace curriculum.	Conflict resolution and children's problem solving are integral parts of the daily curriculum.

Montessori Approach	Progressive Approach
The Learning Environment	
A carefully prepared learning environment is provided utilizing specific Montessori materials.	A carefully planned learning environment is provided utilizing a wide variety of child-oriented materials as well as natural objects.
Concentration and uninterrupted work times are valued.	Learning centers provide planned time for open-ended exploration, interaction, and child-directed learning.
Children are actively engaged in independent work, free to move about the classroom to choose activities and observe other children's work, using quiet voices.	Classrooms can be noisy with a high energy flow and a more defined rhythm; children's voices predominate.

The Montessori approach and progressive education also share many common elements. Each offers a positive learning environment where children can make choices about where and what materials to work with. The goal of both programs is to foster lifelong learning whereby:

- Children are active participants in learning
- Learning is reinforced through the child's repetition of activities
- Parent partnerships are encouraged
- Both child-selected and teacher-directed activities are offered
- Each child's unique talents are nurtured and encouraged
- Teachers are warm and supportive
- Schools are close-knit communities of teachers, children, and parents

Parents can choose with confidence by deciding what environment best matches their family and child's style. For additional information about Bright Horizons programs, visit www.brighthorizons.com or www.brighthorizons.com/montessori.

About Bright Horizons

Bright Horizons is the world's leading provider of child care, early education, and work/life solutions. At Bright Horizons, children are empowered to become confident, successful, lifelong learners and secure, caring people. We help children to see the world as an invitation to learn, to grow, and to live fully — to see a world full of possibilities that are within their reach. We help children approach school and academics with skills, confidence, and the drive for excellence.



Maria Montessori's Legacy

Social reformer, spokesperson for women's rights, physician, and educator, Dr. Montessori was the first woman to graduate with a medical degree in Italy. While working with mentally challenged children in Rome, she created a unique curriculum based on how she believed these children learned best. She achieved outstanding results and, in 1907, opened the first in a series of Montessori schools in an impoverished area of Rome. Her innovative schools treated children with a respect that was unheard of in her time, and she insisted that parents stay involved in their child's education. She introduced child-sized furnishings and developed a system of sequential math materials for children to explore their interests at their own level. Dr. Montessori's methods helped shape early education around the world, with now an estimated 7,000 Montessori schools worldwide.

The Montessori Approach

Montessori is an approach to education grounded in the belief that a child learns best within a social environment that supports and respects each individual's unique development. The primary goal is to help each child reach his or her full potential in all areas of life. Activities promote the development of social skills, emotional growth, and physical coordination as well as cognitive preparation. The holistic curriculum, under the direction of a specially prepared teacher, allows the child to experience the joy of learning, time to enjoy the process and ensure the development of self-esteem, and provides the experiences from which children create their knowledge.