

## Phase-In for Montessori programs

Montessori schools all over the world have phase-in schedules to begin the school year. This is a fundamental part to integrating new students into a Montessori environment. The phase-in period is carefully designed and implemented to ease children into what can be a stressful time for a child. It is a process in which we strive to create a peaceful and welcoming learning environment. Phase-in serves as a stabilizing period in which children and teachers get to know one another. During this transition, we foster security and comfort within the child.

Starting a new or returning child into a Montessori program is an exciting experience. It can also be a difficult adjustment. Whatever the personality of a child, however eager for school, there will be moments of frustration and worry. The process of phase-in is an effort to ensure a smoother beginning and more effective situation for the whole class.

Children need shorter increments of time to establish and reestablish procedures and ground rules. They familiarize themselves with the classroom routines, materials, and the physical space (bathroom, rest area, eating areas, etc.). During this shorter period of time the teachers can establish and re-establish a relationship with each child individually, by moving slowly and creating an atmosphere of respect and peacefulness.

The gradual phase-in allows the child to absorb and digest new concepts and ideas without becoming confused from too much information. Phase-in sets the tone of the classroom by respecting and caring for each other and the environment. It sets the stage for making choices and independent learning for the long year ahead. The success of phase-in influences the children's health, well-being and lifelong learning.

Although the four day phase-in schedule can be a challenge for parents, the end result is that all the children feel more at ease and comfortable at MMS.

During Phase-in, MMS staff will:

Ease children into the Montessori Environment

1. Comfort children
2. Reassure children

Set Up Routines

1. Eating
2. Bathroom
3. Nap

Ground Rules for Children & Adults

1. Walk slowly and carefully / walk around rugs. This helps children develop body awareness and control.
2. Use quiet voices. Having quiet voices in general facilitates an environment conducive to concentration. Normal "classroom" noise is expected and acceptable.
3. Carry things one at a time. This process build respect for materials, aids concentration, and strength/muscle control.

4. Use only one activity at a time. This process again aids developing concentration and focus and facilitates good manners and the basis for future sharing when age appropriate.
5. Return work neatly and properly to the correct place. Children build visual memory, concentration, and assist with the concept of the classroom as a community.
6. Handle materials respectfully. This develops the respect of materials and demonstrates care of our environment and belongings.
7. Touch only your own work unless invited by another. The concept of “sharing” is not forced, but gradually builds. Someone may wish to use a work independently, and that is absolutely acceptable in the Montessori environment.
8. When an activity is at a table or rug, no one else may take or touch it. This gives children a sense of ownership and introduces the idea that other people have rights as well. True sharing emerges when developmentally appropriate.
9. In the older classrooms, we demonstrate to keep all work on a table or rug. This practice allows adequate work space, safety of the children and materials, and aids in focusing on an activity.
10. Again in the older classrooms, we demonstrate how to “interrupt” others. We do this by placing a quiet hand on the shoulder of the adult or other child who is busy or speaking with someone else, and we wait for their attention patiently. This allows people to focus and listen when we need attention by politely waiting instead of interrupting.
11. Transition and group times are a time for listening and interacting with adults appropriately. Moving with a group of children is necessary and we attempt to do so with ease and respect. Group time at the rug is also a time for listening or interaction and movement. This builds a continued sense of community in the class.

More ground rules are introduced as needed or to meet the needs of a particular classroom or situation. All rules are aimed at assisting children learn to cope in a group setting in school and to reinforce our concern of safety for everyone.

### **Montessori Phase-in is for everyone...even returning students**

1. For returning students, phase-in is a slow reminder of all the classroom rules and an introduction to any new changes in the classroom: new teachers, new friends, and new procedures.
2. Sometimes, returning students feel that they “know it all” in the area of ground rules. As a result, they may become challenging. We in turn ask them to be helpers or role models for anyone new in the class and try to build their confidence and leadership abilities.
3. Phase-in is a process that encourages and promotes role modeling by returning students. Role modeling is very important. It lends children to learn many things:
  - a. Helps build a solid foundation of ground rules.
  - b. Allow opportunities for success and thereby builds positive self-esteem.
  - c. Helps children gain experience and confidence in leadership roles.

All of this combines to encourage our returning children to stay focused and helps them be open to learning new things.

**The schedule for MMS Four day Phase-in period is:**

**Infant Toddler and Toddler classes**

Class Day: Tuesday through Friday = 9:30am to 11:30am

Half Day: Tuesday through Friday = 9:30am to 12:30pm

School Day: Tuesday and Wednesday = 9:00am to 3:30pm

All Day: Tuesday and Wednesday = 9:00am to 3:30pm

School Day: Thursday and Friday = 8:30am to 3:30pm

All Day: Thursday and Friday = 7:30am to 3:30pm

**3-6 classes**

Class Day: Tuesday through Friday = 9:45am to 11:45am

Half Day: Tuesday through Friday = 8:30am to 12:30pm

School Day: Tuesday through Friday = 8:30am to 3:30pm

All Day: Tuesday through Friday = 7:30am to 5:30pm