

MONTESSORI EUROPE DECLARATION OF GOTHENBURG – 16TH OCTOBER 2005

The Montessori Europe congress (14-16 October 2005) is based on the universal theme of “Power to the Child – Children’s Rights in our World”. This congress has declared that it is a human right of every child to be permitted self-determined choice in learning at all ages. It is also a human right to learn and grow without stress or pressure. Learning should be a natural and enjoyable process of development throughout life. Human beings are born with the ability and desire to guide their own learning when placed in the right conditions.

Montessori education provides a means of giving these rights to children and young people in our society. Montessori Europe has agreed that, for Montessori education to prosper in a manner that fully supports these rights, there is a need for quality criteria in Montessori pre-schools, schools and teacher training institutions.

An initial working programme for the required criteria has been set down at this congress based on co-operative work done at Montessori Europe congresses. During the period 2005-2008 Montessori Europe aims to reach full agreement on these criteria. It will continue to refine this work, providing details under each of the criteria below. It will take into account Dr. Maria Montessori’s writings, other relevant developments in education and the general consensus of Montessori teachers and trainers throughout Europe. Montessori Europe, through its executive committee, national organisations and members, will examine the value of registration and/or monitoring systems to support these criteria. It is the aim of Montessori Europe to have agreement on these matters at its congress in 2008.

As the basis for further work, the congress of Montessori Europe 2005 agrees that it is a necessary requirement of Montessori pre-schools, schools and teacher training institutions to follow the criteria listed in this document.

Required criteria for Montessori schools for all ages:

1. In each group there is at least one adult, Montessori-trained for the relevant age group according to the standards set out below
2. Each group has a prepared environment suitable for the needs of the age group, according to the theory of Dr. Montessori
3. Each group environment includes a full range of Montessori activities and materials suitable for the age group
4. There are children from a mixed age range in the same group to allow independent, co-operative and interactive learning
5. Each child has the opportunity for uninterrupted work (work cycles) of two and a half to three hours each day.
6. Free choice by children is an essential part of the pedagogical programme in each group.
7. The adults respect the person and rights of the child.
8. The adults working with the group observe the children daily.
9. Freedom of movement and choice are the basis for education and development of children under 3 years.
10. Sensorial education and structured freedom are the basis for education of children 3-6 years.
11. Cosmic education and self-determined learning are the basis for education of children 6-12 years and adolescents.
12. Montessori groups aim to help children to become independent self-responsible learners

Elements for training programmes for Montessori teachers – (the intensity, duration and rigour of these elements have yet to be worked out and should be agreed by 2008):

1. Programmes include reflective study of Montessori theory related to practice and vice versa.
2. Programmes require reading of text books by Dr. Maria Montessori
3. Programmes include presentation to students of age-relevant Montessori materials and activities
4. Students are given opportunities to practise with Montessori materials and activities
5. Programmes give students skills in preparing or making Montessori materials and activities, and in making documented observations
6. Students are required to observe and practise in a Montessori group under qualified supervision
7. Teacher training programmes include learning experiences based on the Montessori approach to learning

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