



MONTESSORI EUROPE
International Conference 29-31 October 2004 in Prague
“Children love to learn – not to be taught!”

Declaration of Prague

-The Child is truly a miraculous being, and this should be felt deeply by the educator- Maria Montessori

The Prague Declaration is intended to be the basis for national and European initiatives, supporting the rights of children and young people as well as establishing appropriate living and learning conditions for them.

This Declaration is addressed to the policy makers, educators, partners of children and young people in Europe, Montessori preschools and Montessori schools in Europe, the national Montessori organizations, and all reform educational movements, such as free school movements. These partners are called upon to join the Prague Declaration, adhering to its content in practice and advocating its content towards parents, government agencies and other institutions

Preamble

Today's children and young people, male and female, are citizens of Europe and the world. In the next decades, European children and young people will be shaping and becoming responsible for their continent and its future. Their beliefs and values, social attitudes and approach to learning will determine how prepared our “old continent” will be for the future.

The technological possibilities for shaping our future have increased immensely in the last decades: biotechnology, microelectronics, nano- and information technology are increasingly determining our daily lives and social environment. We are in the process of rethinking our relationship with nature and giving it an ecologically-oriented foundation. Multi- culturalism is a growing social reality which has already started to influence our societies in Europe.

As today's adults, we will be handing over to our children a world full of new tasks and problems. At the same time, it is in our hands to prepare children and young people for



dealing with this legacy and for shaping their future. With what kind of social values and attitude toward life will children and young people take over these tasks? To what extent will their tolerance, intelligence and competence have been developed, when they become responsible for the future of Europe?

Children and young people live in the present and today's adults should respect that their lives will be more uncertain but will also hold more opportunities. It is our task to help children and young people to reach their potential in order to make use of these opportunities, personally and for society. The risks will not always be possible to foresee or prevent.

Education can decisively influence the development of a child's or young person's personality and living conditions. Therefore the following principles of the Prague Declaration should form the basis and reference point for all educational actions and thinking:

Children love to learn, not to be taught!

1. Each child has the right to learn in an atmosphere of self-initiated activity and freedom according to his or her stage of development.
2. Each child and young person has the right to fulfill his / her full learning potential by learning autonomously according to his / her phase of development.
3. Each child and young person has the right to learn holistically with a constant and consistent interaction between physical and mental activities.
4. Facilitating children and young people in their learning must involve respecting their dignity. Adults are their learning partners.
5. Each adult who is involved in education should make a commitment to know and respect the UN Convention for Children's Rights.

When all of this becomes reality, Europe will be a lively, creative and peaceful continent.



*SIGNATORIES TO THE DECLARATION OF PRAGUE
31ST OCTOBER 2004 (1)*



*SIGNATORIES TO THE DECLARATION OF PRAGUE
31ST OCTOBER 2004 (2)*



*SIGNATORIES TO THE DECLARATION OF PRAGUE
31ST OCTOBER 2004 (3)*