



Make Montessori work for you.

You've tried other ways to improve education. Now try one that works for every child in every setting.

With more than 100 years of practice, Montessori has a proven history of supporting a child's natural development to create capable, well-rounded students who become productive and fulfilled adults. Montessori helps children follow their interests and passions to develop strong skills in academics, leadership, self-discipline, responsibility, independence, and initiative. All this is achieved through a rigorous education approach that is hands-on, self-paced, collaborative, and joyful—everything that is needed to create a lifelong learner and doer.

A personalized education is possible in public schools.

Montessori meets and exceeds the rigorous, high-quality standards expected of all schools, but it does not check off all the boxes used to measure school success. Montessori works because it personalizes education for each child while serving a group of children in a common classroom environment that facilitates independent and group learning. Best of all, Montessori can deliver results with more children in each classroom—because the children do the work while the teacher guides progress and success.

Montessori is the best way to close the achievement gap while increasing achievement for all.

Montessori offers a solution to move all children ahead, no matter where they start. A recent study of Montessori magnet schools in Hartford, Connecticut shows that all Montessori students had higher achievement than students in traditional schools. In addition, low-income children performed at nearly the same rate as their more affluent peers, dramatically closing the opportunity/achievement gap without lowering expectations or standards. The researchers note, “By the end of kindergarten, the Montessori children performed better on standardized tests of reading and math, engaged in more positive interaction on the playground, and showed more advanced social cognition and executive control. They also showed more concern for fairness and justice.”¹ These exceptional results are mirrored in school districts in states as different as Texas² and South Carolina.³

Parents want personalized education that balances intellectual and social and emotional development.

Rigorous public opinion research conducted by Association Montessori Internationale shows that American parents want to develop well-rounded, capable children.⁴ This is reinforced by recent public opinion research conducted by Real Choices that shows while parents want high-quality academics, their main concern is finding education programs that are personalized to their children and develop a full range of skills beyond academics.⁵ Offering different education approaches such as Montessori in public schools dramatically increases parental satisfaction with their schools and provides them with confidence that they can make the best-possible choices for their child's education.

¹Lillard, A. S., Heise, M. J., Richey, E. M., Tong, X., Hart, A., & Bray, P. M. (2017). Montessori Preschool Elevates and Equalizes Child Outcomes: A Longitudinal Study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1783. <http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01783>

²Ford, T. (2015). Profile of a Growing Urban School: The Lumin Experience. *NAMTA Journal*, v40, n2, p165-173.

³Culclasure, B., Fleming, D.J., Riga, G., & Sprogis, A. (2018). An Evaluation of Montessori Education in South Carolina's Public Schools. The Riley Institute at Furman University. Unpublished manuscript.

⁴AMI Parent Motivation: Analysis and Messaging. (2018). Accessible at: <https://montessori-ami.org/resource-library/presentations>

⁵What Parents Want from Education: The Case for Real Choices. (2018). http://files.realschoolchoices.org/F_RealChoices_ResearchPaper_2018.pdf



Create policies that create access to Montessori.

Much like education, a one-size-fits-all approach to education policy for all schools doesn't meet the demands of parents nor the needs of today's diverse students. Montessori produces results because it is different—and it needs education policies that allow it to operate and be successful in public settings. These can be implemented without jeopardizing the quality of traditional schools.

Childcare Licensing

Mixed age groups are a key part of the Montessori instructional model. Many current policies prohibit mixed aged classrooms when they are often the key to better outcomes. Younger students learn from older peers, and older peers learn how to lead in an environment of cooperation and respect. This is critical preparation for learning how to interact and succeed in the real world. In most states, the Montessori instructional model is often at odds with childcare licensing requirements due to the mixed age groups. Flexibility in childcare licensing enables Montessori programs to provide a highly effective learning environment where children acquire the fundamental social, emotional, and behavioral skills necessary to be successful students and productive individuals.

Teacher Credential Recognition

Montessori teachers are the most highly and rigorously trained teachers in the world. However, this globally recognized training is often not regarded by states as qualifying training for a state teaching license. Montessori teachers learn by doing, similar to other programs with a student-teaching component, and although it is not based at a university, training includes the same type of in-depth study as other alternative teacher certificate programs. There is even a K-12 Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE), which provides oversight and accreditation to training programs to ensure all programs are held to the highest standard. Ideally, states should recognize certificates from accredited programs as valid credentials to earn a teaching license in that state or provide a way for teachers to earn their Montessori credentials and state teaching license simultaneously.

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

Quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) are multi-level, differentiated performance assessment systems intended to increase transparency about program quality and incentivize continuous improvement among programs. These systems look for markers of success that look different in a Montessori environment. QRIS needs to be broad enough to recognize the benefit of Montessori programs even if those programs do not mimic the exact rubric. QRIS should recognize the differences of the Montessori approach to instruction so that more Montessori schools can operate authentically and participate in QRIS.

With policies that accommodate the Montessori approach to education, we can close the achievement gap, provide what parents want for their children, and do what's best for children now and in the future.

For specific policy recommendations and to learn more about the Montessori Public Policy Initiative (MPPI) Policy Landscape and recommendations, please visit: <https://www.montessoriadvocacy.org/bellwether>.