

## *Using the Guides with Ages 6 to 9 and 9 to 12*

Like the primary classroom, the elementary classroom is multi-age. In the primary classroom each child is allowed to progress at his or her own pace, being neither pushed ahead nor held back. Many children in the primary classroom will be working with some of the elementary material. So there is an overlap in the levels of work done in the primary and elementary classrooms.

The Montessori cosmic theme is cyclical rather than linear. Each year is a step upward in a spiral of learning as the child explores each study at his or her own level and pace. Because ages 6 to 9 and 9 to 12 remain with the same group of peers for three years the child is able to work on his own level to accomplish lessons within a three year period rather having to master a set amount and level of subjects in a single year as in a traditional classroom. The child is able to work at his own pace and level and find peers working on the same level. Because she has the same teacher and friends for those three years a greater understanding of relationships and sense of community develops.

Building on the solid foundation established in the primary classroom the elementary child is eager to explore the whys and hows of everything in more detail and expand into related areas of interest. So the overall theme of the elementary curriculum is the same as the primary but on a different plane of the learning spiral. It is based on Maria Montessori's concept of cosmic education which centers on the Great Lessons where all the areas of the classroom are integrated rather than individual subjects.

The role of the elementary classroom guide or homeschool parent is to provide a stimulating environment rich with tools and resources that allow the child to continue on the path of discovery. The naming of things and sense of wonder of the primary child becomes an inquisitive pursuit of cause and effect.

All Montessori work progresses from the known to the unknown, simple to complex, the whole to its parts, and tactile and concrete to abstract. The elementary child is eager for the more complex, the detail of the parts of the whole, and increasingly abstract concepts. In all the areas, practical life, language, math, geometry, botany and gardening, zoology, geography, and history the lessons are increasingly complex, detailed, and abstract as the child progresses.

Montessori elementary children have developed in the primary classroom many basic skills needed in their eager search for more information. All the areas of the classroom become springboards for launching into a deeper investigation of the world around them. They continue identifying, classifying, labeling, comparing, and categorizing. They now satisfy their increased sense of curiosity by putting into practical use the skills of reading and writing acquired in the primary classroom as they begin independent research and self-motivated discovery. (p. 1 of 3)

Guided by the student's own interests, studies include ecosystems and their animals, plants, and climates; advanced map skills and mapmaking; earth geology; more complex science experiments; more detailed time lines including time lines of art and music, number systems, written language, civilizations, clocks and calendars, inventions and inventors; world literature; and significant people including peacemakers such as M.K. Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Helen Keller, Desmond Tutu, and Maria Montessori.

### Practical Life

The skills for maintenance of the classroom and its materials and care of the plants and animals that were practiced in the primary classroom are now fully integrated into the activities of the day as the children assume responsibility for their environment. Dusting the shelves, sweeping, vacuuming, mopping, keeping the equipment clean and organized, cooking and baking in snack and meal preparation, caring for the needs of the animals and plants, repairing household items, and other community activities most of which are initiated and carried out by the children.

### Cultural Studies

The study of the continents continues as in the 3 to 6 classroom but in greater detail. By comparing and exploring the similarities of the needs of people around the world, the child gains a greater sense of interconnectedness with all living things and an awareness of being a part of the larger family of humanity. The study of cultures and people stimulates an interest in community service.

### Timelines

The study of timelines and history gives the elementary child an awareness of the evolving stages of civilization. Timeline of Life, Timeline of Ancient Civilizations, American History Timeline, Timeline of Scientists, Timeline of Explorers, Timeline of Art, Timeline of Music (see Sources for Materials)

### Geography

Use of all the puzzle maps, more detailed map making, Pin Maps, and independent and group research on places of interest, reports.

### Language

In language the elementary children move into classic literature; poetry; more complex parts of speech, spelling, sentence structure and diagraming; research skills such as alphabetizing and library use; oral reading and reporting; creative writing; and drama. The pink, blue and green language series is integrated into this curriculum. The Pink series includes matching pictures, letters, and words; phonetics and word building with the moveable alphabet; rhyming words; sight words (such as the, to, was, said, of, a, as, has, they, she, by). The Blue series includes double consonant blends, digraphs (sh, ch, th, wh), short vowels, secret messages. The Green series includes long vowels, silent letters, soft letters (as in circle and giraffe), puzzle words (such as though, through, rough, enough, laugh, aunt, tongue, rhombus, heart, drought), writing words and labeling, sentence building, and sentence analysis. Reading and writing skills are practiced in all the areas of the classroom and in research reports of various subjects of interest.

See *Explode The Code* in the Table of Contents for a phonics workbook series through fourth grade.

## Math

In math the elementary children continue wherever they left off in the primary with the Golden Bead materials. Work includes skip counting, squares and cubes, multiplication, short division, long multiplication and division, adding/subtracting/multiplying fractions, factoring, prealgebra, and recording the data with paper and pencil. Work becomes increasingly abstract with the Stamp Game and the Dot Game. The algebraic aspects of the Binomial and Trinomial cubes that were assembled in the primary are now discovered.

Other Montessori materials include Racks and Tubes Division, Multiplication checkerboard, Decimal checkerboard, Algebraic peg board, Square Root Board, Pi Chart.

## Geometry

Geometry has been a basic part of the primary study with the use of geometric insets, geometric solids, geometric cabinet, and the constructive boxes with plane figures to feel, trace, and manipulate to discover spatial relationships. It continues in the elementary with further exploration of lines and angles.

## Zoology and Botany

The primary classroom introduces the plant and animal kingdoms. Picture cards are used for naming, labeling, sorting, classifying, and learning parts of plants and parts of various animals. This continues in the elementary with research and a more detailed study of the five classes of invertebrates, nine phyla of invertebrates, and the classification and organization of the animal kingdom and plant kingdom. Many extended classrooms and home schools have farm animals and gardens to observe and care for.

Some examples of materials available are Leaf Characteristics (Leaf Types, Leaf Veins, Leaf Margins), The Five Kingdoms (Prokaryote, Protista, Fungi, Animal, Plant), Fungus Kingdom, Parts of a Mushroom. These may also be made using internet and books for resources.

## Science

Experiments and various Montessori elementary materials for investigating such things as solution, sediment, the carbon cycle, water cycle, nitrogen cycle, periodic table of elements, constructing molecules, particles, matter, air, gases, protons, neutrons, quarks, string theory, parts of the atom, periodic table of elements, motion, force, gravity, magnetism, light, heat, energy, sound, electricity, simple machines, states of matter, acids and bases, physical and chemical changes.

Examples of materials available are Atom Board, Nomenclature Cards for Parts of the Atom, Periodic Table and Elements, various kits for science experiments.

Maria Montessori's chemistry experiments are in her book *From Childhood to Adolescence*, ch 7.

## Journals and record keeping

The elementary student is increasingly more responsible for directing his or her own course of study and is responsible to draw up weekly (or monthly) agreements with the adult that outlines a work plan, and he or she keeps a work journal that also serves for record keeping.