International Montessori Schools and Child Development Centres

with International Baccalaureate Secondary Section
Bilingual and multilingual
Divergent thinking
Joy in learning
Creative people
Respect
Motivation
Welcome to unique
Self-esteem
Harmonious personality
Independence
International curriculum
Flow
Responsibility
Happiness

Education Centres!
Table of content

Page:

Education on the cutting edge  2
Parent Infant Community  14
Toddler Community  18
Children’s House  24
Primary  30
Secondary Education
International Baccalaureate (IB MYB)  38
International Baccalaureate (IB DP)  48
It takes a village to raise a child  54

Author: Annie R. Hoekstra – de Roos
Director International Montessori Schools and Child Development Centres

Design: Tuuli Sauren
Art Director Inspirit International Communications

Printer: Edition Imprimie
Recycled paper with vegetable based ink
Brussels, Belgium

www.international-montessori.org

ISBN /EAN number: 9789081926904
Education on the
Preparation of the children for the future...

Do we know what the world will look like in 20 years time?

This is difficult to say; we see trends in business, phenomena in relationships, environmental changes and so on. The world is changing more rapidly than ever.

With a change in circumstances, an urgent change in educational practice is needed. Should we still prepare our children as is typically done in batches of the same age and by sitting still and listening to what the teacher says? Are those the skills they need to urgently develop for a changing future?

We believe that children need guidance in developing and maintaining qualities that will serve them well now and in the future. Qualities that will allow them to become independent, self-reliant, flexible, responsible, logical, respectful and open-minded people.

... and living in a constructive and supported present.
Traditionally, children are helped predominantly to develop the left side of the brain. However, many qualities needed nowadays are seated in the right side of the brain. In order to ensure complete and harmonious development, elements seated in both the left and right side of the brain deserve stimulation.
When qualities of the left side of the brain are developed exclusively, children become convergent thinkers. But when both sides are developed and the two halves of the brain work harmoniously together, the outcome is divergent thinking. Divergent thinkers obtain good academic knowledge and simultaneously develop emotional intelligence. They are motivated, can communicate well, and respect themselves and others!

Divergent thinking by its very nature cannot be cultivated by:

- Sitting still and doing the same thing as everyone else
- Following an established pace
- Being taught through predominantly oral and visual input
- Testing skills and knowledge through means of previously taught answers

However, this still is the traditional way of teaching. As a consequence, research shows how divergent thinking dwindles over a lifetime:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>% of Divergent Thinkers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 year olds</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 to 10 year olds</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 to 15 year olds</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 +</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The educational philosophy

The Montessori approach is based on a profound respect for the child. It’s originator, Dr. Maria Montessori believed in the necessity to treat children with dignity, trust and patience. The Montessori classrooms are constructed specifically to meet the child’s needs at the different stages of development. The child’s natural love of learning is respected and emphasis is placed on the importance of learning at one’s own place. The combination of all aspects of the approach ensures that children can develop both sides of the brain, thus having the opportunity to become divergent thinkers. Children are given guidance to become independent thinkers, who are able to choose, reflect and make decisions. These are very important life skills to have in our ever-changing society.

Dr. Maria Montessori knew this without using the modern terminology. She was convinced that when you follow the natural pattern of development and do not impose the traditional stifling way of education, the child flourishes now and in the future.

How can a child then remain a divergent thinker?

First of all, it is important that children feel emotionally safe, that they are in a positive and constructive environment, without competition and with dedicated teachers with whom they have a reciprocal relationship. Secondly, this environment needs to offer a variety of experiences: multilingual, multicultural, multi-sensorial, multi-age, multi-level classrooms. The word **multi** is the key in becoming an independent divergent thinker. Diversity with respect for the qualities of each child is needed.
The theory is translated to classroom practice in a unique manner:

**Individualised education**

We humans are the only species on the planet who are all different. We are meant to stay that way. Respect for our uniqueness ensures that we become happy people and that we can contribute in various ways. Every child has a different learning style. The Montessori classroom offers personalised interaction and presentations. This ensures that each lesson contains something familiar and something new, thus building the personality at exactly the right level and pace.

**Inspiring classrooms**

The Montessori classrooms for children aged 1 to 11 offers a well-structured environment with beautiful concrete materials that help children move from concrete manipulation to abstract understanding. Children learn through all their senses. In order for a person to remember something long-term, it must have been fully experienced thoroughly. That is why ‘hands-on’ education is so fruitful. Understanding takes place through the integration of the multi-facetted experience which builds the long-term memory.

The development of internal mental order is dependent upon external order. This external order is facilitated by each material having its own place in the room that can always be found when not in use. Children are introduced to the materials in an orderly sequence and logical progression. Through this they develop their capacity for logical and orderly thinking.

The classrooms also have many interesting language, cultural and historic objects, rocks, minerals, experiments, posters, mobiles and books. These objects create an inspiring and motivating surrounding.

**Challenging academics**

Academic content starts in the Children’s Houses with the children experiencing the concepts of number and quality up to 9999. They work with the concrete ‘golden bead material’ and experience abstract concepts such as the four operations by means of actual performance. Before entering Primary, they also work on their writing and reading skills and do many extended language activities related to biology, history and geography.

From age six onwards imagination develops and children become interested in the world at large. They are exposed to a vast integrated curriculum including all subjects. This holistic way of teaching allows for the interest and motivation to develop. Children can work uninterrupted and therefore in full flow. Joy for learning also develops through a level of freedom and decision-making. Students become engaged!
The full International Baccalaureate Middle Year Program (MYP) curriculum is offered to students from age 11 onwards. Here as well, the students do not work on an average. When ready to excel they can move up and continue at the next level. The integrated curriculum offers all subjects: Individuals and society (geography, history, social studies), Sciences (biology, physics and chemistry), Languages at mother tongue (Language and literature) or second Language Acquisition level (English and French, as well as choices of Dutch, German, and Spanish), Mathematics, Physical and Health education, the Arts being performing arts, visual arts, music and Design.

Committed teachers

The teacher carefully monitors each child’s development. He/she recognises and interprets each child’s needs and interests based on their stages of self-formation and personality traits. For the ages from zero to six the teacher presents the materials and activities that match the children’s developmental needs. It is in the child’s subsequent independent use of the materials and activities that learning takes place. The child works at his own level and pace.

At the Primary level children also continue to work at their personal level that is facilitated within different small group structures. The teacher offers the full Montessori curriculum and is in tune with the unique personality of each child. This allows the adult to work on their strengths and challenges. He/she also directs each child into areas of their natural interest. A motivated interested child learns a lot!

At the secondary level students also work in small groups. We believe that at this age, students need and deserve a personal and reciprocal relationship with their teachers. Home teachers provide the mentor role and the organisation and connection with the other subjects given by specialist teachers. The full team offer one-to-one mentoring when needed and assist in the development of the whole child, including their social and emotional evolution and development of self-esteem.

Montessori Teacher Training is obtained from full-time training centres of the Association Montessori International (AMI). This is the worldwide, leading Montessori organisation. Teachers additionally hold a bachelor or masters degree. Montessori teachers are often called directors or directresses.

Secondary teachers are bachelor, masters or PHD diploma holders and have attended the International Baccalaureate training programme.
Bilingual and multilingual learning environments

Language is the tool in becoming interculturally aware and in developing respect for others. People speaking different languages become multilingual and multicultural.

The school provides a unique and complete bilingual environment at the Toddler, Children’s House and Primary levels. This is put in practice by means of having two adults simultaneously in each classroom: one always speaking English and the other one always speaking French. Both work with the children in different group settings and use the language for all daily matters. As such, children are given the opportunity to absorb the second language(s) as a whole structure.

In a bilingual setting, the brain develops a ‘second language network’ that can also be used at a later stage for the acquisition of more languages. Bilingual students learn additional languages much easier than people who have been brought up monolingual. In the classroom, language learning happens through a reciprocal relationship with the teachers and by means of offering new vocabulary together with active involvement and manipulation of related objects. Thus Montessori and bilingualism are a good combination.

When one hears something new, it enters the short-term memory. When the person does not do anything with that information or it doesn’t relate to something known, the brain will prune it away. Our language use also describes the process. One needs ‘to do’ something with the new information, thus understanding involves active interaction. When a concept is poured into a concrete experience that involves other senses besides listening, the knowledge is integrated much quicker and much deeper. The manipulation with the hands helps information move into the long-term memory.

In the Middle School, more languages are added to the student’s programme. Students having had the exposure to English and French in Primary can then continue with Dutch, German and/or Spanish. The level of the languages is geared to the student’s starting point. This complete multilingual programme often results in teenagers being able to speak four to five languages!
**Multi-Age Grouping**

Traditionally, same-age group education is the norm up to university level. It is only there that people are grouped according to their levels and interests. Same-age group teaching is a historic concept developed for the sake of efficiency and minimum cost involved, but has not been seen from the child's learning point of view. In actuality children learn a lot from each other. They observe what and how other students work and incorporate this in their thinking.

At the Montessori school, children of different ages share the same classroom. A positive and constructive multi-age group ensures that children have the opportunity to work with students who are at a different level, both from a skill, ability and academic point of view. By doing so, they become good team players, develop leadership skills, learn to communicate with others, learn to assist and instruct others, become empathetic, learn to receive peer instructions and above all learn that being different is the norm. These are the skills they will need to lead a happy life and successful career.

**Development of all aspects of the personality**

In order to help develop all aspects that are seated in the left and right side of the brain, attention is given to all aspects of the personality. Consequently, all subjects taught in Primary and Middle School are equally important. An example of this is music. Children do general music activities in the classrooms and additionally every child from six onwards plays an instrument. They can choose either piano, violin or guitar. The instrument is incorporated in the daily routine and children receive lessons during school hours. The pianos are always occupied!

Families of Children’s House children can choose to learn the violin. Lessons include familiarisation and playing the instrument, music theory and general enjoyment with music. The school rents out all sizes of violins, even the smallest being a 1/16!
Balance of freedom and logical limits

To help the children become independent, self-reliant and motivated learners they need a level of freedom in making choices and decisions. Within the Montessori classroom the child can choose the activity, with whom to work, and the length of time to work. The child also has the freedom to get up and find what he needs and to interact with others along the way. Freedom aids the development only when it encompasses logical limits and responsibilities. Some examples in the Children’s House and Primary:

- Each activity is presented and set up in such a way that it helps the child to see cause and effect.
- The freedom to choose work is met with the responsibility that the work is constructive and productive.
- Social awareness is created by a limited amount of each kind of equipment. When it is in use one needs to wait or ask that child if one can help.
- Conflicts are used as a process for growth. Primary children learn a lot by talking through the problem and by learning to see the issue from different points of view.

A healthy mind in a healthy body

The fact that children develop very well outside should not be underestimated.

Every school has a beautiful outdoor area that is used for free play, gross motor activities, games, music, gardening and lunch, weather permitting. Young children often settle well in the outdoors and learn a lot about social interactions. Sandpits and swings aid in the development of the physical side of the child and also give opportunities for problem solving. The teachers are with the children during outdoor time and assist and initiate all sorts of activities. Their presence allows for the outdoors to be a constructive learning opportunity.

The school puts a large emphasis on healthy food, simple cooking and good eating habits. Food that is purchased for the children is predominantly ecological. Children eat together in a very polite manner with decorated tables and name tags for seating. In order to assist the development of responsibility, they help with preparation, decoration and clean up.

The materials and furniture in the classrooms are predominantly made of natural products. We do not believe in putting children in a ‘plastic’ environment with unwelcome toxins. The concrete materials are made of wood, paper and rubber. Buildings are renovated in an environmental sustainable manner, therefore offering a healthy surrounding to the children!
Open Plan learning environments

In order to put ‘science behind classroom practice’ in action one needs to challenge the traditional ‘classroom’ concept.

It is not easy for children to develop into independent, responsible personalities with divergent thinking capacities when spending the best part of every day in a rectangular classroom with a ‘batch’ of same age students and an electronic whiteboard. If one wants people to ‘think out of the box’ one must not first put them into one.

Every age range requires a different environment due to the developmental needs. To add to the variety, different learning styles are valued throughout the school and require different ‘ingredients’. Beavers, owls, dolphins and foxes can be who they are meant to be and live their strengths. Not everyone needs to be a beaver to succeed in school. Additionally skill based learning gives the students a chance to become ‘all rounders’.

In order to provide that level of flexibility and opportunity, an open floor plan learning environment is a basic ingredient:

• The group depends on each other, like living in a family. This creates responsibility. They work and eat and clean up together. Appropriate communication and interaction develops.

• The group is a ‘living organism’. The community is not rule based; it is logic based. Logical consequences evolve from specific events. There is of course freedom of speech that includes the important factor of empathy and respect for others: that your freedom ends where someone else’s freedom begins.

• The teachers work ‘between’ the children. As a team they know the children well and can assist in developing the strengths and challenges.
• Students learn from each other by having the opportunity to observe and interact with students that have varying degrees of maturity. Through practice different skills develop.
• It allows for interdisciplinary work. In order to help develop critical and creative thinking, students need to have the opportunity to see topics from different points.
• When living and working in a flexible environment, different intelligences are required. This simulates functioning in the real world and gives practice in becoming flexible and adaptable.
• Helps to accept that differences are beautiful! We do not need to be the same. Human beings are the only species that comes in such a beautiful variety. Only when one has access to differences, one can ‘crawl into the skin’ of someone else, and become empathetic.

The open plan learning environments are unique in itself and are situated in ‘inspiring’ buildings. Several are located in large villas and others in renovated farmhouses dating back as far as 1651.

As the children mature and move in school to the subsequent cycle, they experience different learning environments that give the message that our immediate surroundings, its people and the world at large is very interesting; one can continuously learn, develop, get new ideas and create a wonderful life for oneself and others.
The Parent Infant
A good start lasts ..........a lifetime!

Babies observe and absorb the world around them. They have an enormous potential ready to be developed.

In our culture, this potential is not fully recognised. Information given to new parents tends to revolve around food, sleep and growth. However, during the first year of life, the most intense development takes place in terms of neuro-networking. Adults can assist the development tremendously by providing an environment that is in tune with the abilities of the baby.

The Parent Infant Community offers a platform where parents and their baby meet with a specialist in the development of infants in a specifically prepared environment containing equipment, furniture, ideas and information geared toward stimulating the baby’s optimal development.
For the parents

We offer a peaceful, serene environment where parents can meet one another with their infants. There is time for sharing experiences and to learn more, on a practical and theoretical level, on how to help infants during their first year of life.

Information session topics

Each Parent Infant course runs for a period of 10 weeks. During these sessions parents and babies spend time together in the prepared environment and on alternative weeks information sessions on various topics are held.

- Advantages of moving freely
- Creating an optimal infant-development-friendly home
- Criteria on Toys
- What is happening in the child’s brain and how to help connect those millions of neurons
- Independent movement and its effect on self esteem
- Power of the absorbent mind
- Emotional development - oneness and separateness
- Language acquisition and second language learning
- Assisting weaning, eating and sleeping
- Next stages of development

Topics can vary according to the needs of the parents involved. A variety of articles are offered and books are available from the Parent Library.
The prepared activities are suitable for babies who are from six weeks old to walking age. The materials stimulate the development and awareness of gross and fine motor movements and eye-hand coordination. The environment invites freedom of movement with opportunities for rolling, crawling, pulling up and walking. It also stimulates the start of positive social and emotional development.

Developmental toys for babies often need consideration before being introduced to the child. They are often too big, too loud, made of plastic and too complex. We suggest using healthy materials made of natural products such as wood, rubber, bamboo and silver. The selected toys and furniture are designed in such a way that it gives the infants the possibility to achieve what they are developmentally ready for.

In the first year of life, the brain develops at a speed that will never occur again. It is extremely busy with the formation of neuropathways. Depending on the concrete activities and experiences that the child encounters, the brain wires itself accordingly and networks are established.

The parent infant environment includes:

- A movement mat with a mirror in which they can see their own reflection and become aware of themselves
- Mobiles specially prepared for the development of the eyes and the eye-hand coordination
- A cestina basket for newborns allowing them to observe the environment unhindered by bars normally found on cribs
- Appropriate rattles and wooden toys to stimulate baby’s experiences through mouth, eyes and hands
- A wooden kiosk with bars and a small bridge for children to use for pulling up, cruising, crawling over, climbing and descending
- Books
- Cruiser wagons to stimulate upright position and walking
- Musical instruments
- Small weaning chair and table, tiny cutlery and crockery, thus allowing the child to become involved in eating solids and drinking
- Different suggestions for sleeping arrangements

Every new movement and each small achievement gives the baby the message: ‘I can do this by myself, I am capable!’ The development of a good self-esteem starts right there!
The Toddler Community
A unique year of self-development

The Toddler programme provides an optimal environment suited to the variety of developmental needs of children from approximately 15 months to three years old.

The starting age is not fixed; toddlers can join from when they can sturdily walk. The Toddler Community offers a unique year of self-development in a tender atmosphere of special understanding, respect and support.

Development at this age is very intense. In traditional settings, young children are given plastic toys in crates. However, we believe that this is the age of the absorbent mind, when the child absorbs everything without effort. Therefore, the time needs to be used wisely and not spent only keeping children ‘occupied’.

So much is happening during these early years. The brain is wiring up all new information and constructs the base of the different intelligences. Purposeful activities that include cause and effect give experiences necessary to create a synchronised mind and body. A safe and positive social environment assists in laying the foundation of the personality.
Language acquisition and second language learning

The Toddler programme accommodates the very young child’s sensitive period for language acquisition by offering creative methods to expand their vocabulary. This is done by means of joining conversations, listening to stories, classifying and naming objects, matching cards, learning songs and by giving an individual quality contact with the teachers. The absorbent mind is truly like a sponge! A child aged zero to six can absorb the mother tongue and other languages without any effort! Never again in life does one have this unique state of mind.

The child absorbs complete grammar structures by means of a bilingual environment in which each teacher speaks the same language to the child at all times. When language learning is related to concrete experiences and one-to-one contact, it is stored in the long-term memory. The combination of an attractive classroom and a bilingual setting results in toddlers understanding the new language within a few months. They form a second language brain neuro-network that is established for life.

Constructing the base of the personality

During the first three years of a child’s life they learn about the world they live in and use all their experiences in order to construct the basis of their personality. This is a profound process, which happens unconsciously. Adults can help children by providing a realistic and concrete environment. The child becomes what he lives! Hence, being actively engaged is very important; the hands are the tools of the brain.

The young child needs an ordered environment that offers choice, freedom and appropriate limits. The activities are set up in such a way that after having worked with the teachers, the child can do the activity by him/herself, after which it is returned to its place on the shelf, ready to be used by the next child. This pattern helps the development of order and at the same time gives the message that an object can only be used for what it is meant to be. By materialising limits and freedoms, the child receives a lot of information unconsciously which lessens the need to use the word ‘no’. A positive and constructive environment stimulates the development of the whole personality.
Developing concentration and self-esteem

Children love doing what they see adults do. They absorb these activities and want to try them out by themselves. Being allowed to do these important tasks confirms their role in the family and consequently builds their self-esteem. Practical activities help to refine gross and fine motor skills and assist in building a good span of concentration. It also aids the children in becoming independent in taking care of themselves, others and their environment. The activities include going to the potty, washing hands, cutting fruit for snack, cleaning the painting easel and setting the table.

Creative activities also stimulate the development of fine motor skills. The adult gives precise presentations with scaled down equipment. The activities are set up in an attractive manner and are all color-coded. This helps the children in developing a strong sense of order. It also facilitates returning the items to the shelf and thereby developing the basis of independence and responsibility. All these details ensure a positive experience and give children the message that they are capable of doing things by themselves!

Integration of mind and body

Every activity the child does is helping the development of gross motor movement. With every move children improve their abilities. Outside activities such as balancing beams, trampoline and swings are offered. Additionally, gardening, pushing the wheelbarrows and raking the leaves help a child develop a well-coordinated body. Many of the activities in the toddler programme highlight the skills that lead to physical and mental independence. Children are urged to hang up their own coats and put on their own slippers. The adults collaborate but do not do it for the child. They help the child to find ways to solve problems independently and develop the feeling of ‘I can do it by myself’

Inside, practical life activities help integrate intelligence, will and movement, thus helping the child to form an integrated personality. An example is bread making. When a child prepares the dough, he/she needs to think about the sequence and mix the ingredients. When done, it is put in a sunny place and the dirty utensils are deposited in the dirty dish cart. Upon seeing flour on the floor the child will start sweeping or another child will come and help. Within one activity, mind and body cooperate and unite.
From ‘oneness to separateness’

During the first three years of life, everything happens unconsciously. The child needs to build up several years of life experiences to realise that he/she is not ‘one’ with mum anymore. Inherent to this process, the awareness grows that others have needs too. Therefore toddlers cannot share yet; they are at a stage of self-construction. The activities performed have a much deeper aim than what one can see. During the process, the child nurtures his/her inner self and integrates the personality. Once this sensitivity is fulfilled, which can be around the age of three, the child becomes aware of others. This is when the development of a social being in a familiar group can start.

Laying the foundation of a positive social life

The Toddler Community provides a safe step in the ‘separation’ process from the family. Due to the caring one-to-one relationship with the teachers and the carefully arranged classroom, the children are able to ‘let go’ of mum and join a group.

During the session, the children work independently, in small groups and sometimes perform activities with a larger group. Music is one of those whole group experiences. The children sing and play percussion instruments every day. They build up a repertoire of both English and French songs and poems. Many are performed with actions and a lot of joy!

Respect for the needs of others is practised on a daily basis. Children set the table for others, return activities to the shelf so someone else can use it, clean the easel and so on. Empathy cannot be taught; however it can be lived. When the child is respected for who he/she is and experiences positive adult contact and constructive vocabulary, the child will feel good about him/herself. Those children become contributing members of the group.

The optimal environment stimulates the development of a positive self-image. This is based on trusting that the world is a wonderful place and trusting themselves and their abilities to function in this world. Once this foundation is laid, future development will be very successful.
The Children’s Ho
The absorbent mind at work!

The preschool, named Children’s House, is an attractive and carefully planned environment, geared to the size, pace and developmental needs of children aged 2 and a half to 6 years old. This child-centered community encourages children to integrate all aspects of their personality and to develop a good self-esteem.

The activities in the classroom are divided into several areas. There are the practical life activities, a reading corner, and a wealth of sensorial materials intended for exploration of sounds, shapes, contrasts and textures. The mathematics area offers concrete materials extending from symbols and quantity all the way through to the four mathematical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. The language corner offers materials for preparing the hand for writing while at the same time associating the symbols and sounds of the letters. Biology, history and geography are all considered extended language work and have associated hands-on and attractive materials.

The children work in the different areas throughout the day, at their own level and pace. Much of the work is designed to use individually. Children work autonomously or in a lesson with the teachers. In order to stimulate social and learning skills, different work patterns take place. Children work individually, in pairs and in whole class activities for stories, songs or gross motor activities. The teachers function as mentors, knowing exactly the level of each specific child and helping them advance at their own level and pace.

“Help me to do it by myself!”
Learning to write and read

Pencil grip is developed through practical life exercises and sensorial activities. Without knowing, the child develops muscular movement and fine motor skills. This development refines as the child starts to write with chalk, pencils and pen.

Simultaneously the child learns the alphabet through a multi-sensorial approach. Sandpaper letters are used to introduce the individual letters and the phonograms. The directress shows how to trace them and gives them the corresponding phonetic sound. In this manner the child forms an aural, visual and motor memory, thus guiding this rather abstract acquisition. This is followed by composition of words and phrases with the movable alphabet. This tool allows children to analyse their own thoughts and put them into writing. Other materials follow, presenting the intricacies of non-phonetic spelling, grammar and sentence analysis. Children soon discover that they can read back their stories. This awareness often comes with an explosion of activity and exclamations of ‘I can read!’

Initially the child learns to write and read in either English or French. The choice depends on which of the two languages the child knows best. Once in Primary, the second language is also presented on a written level.

Bilingualism

The Montessori classroom emphasises absorption and expansion of vocabulary by exposing children to precise living language. Each classroom has two teachers: one speaking English and the other French, thus providing an all day, dual language environment. This way multilinguism becomes a fact of life. Children’s House children absorb the languages very quickly when the words spoken are related to their daily life, to objects, tools or actions. The concrete nature of the Montessori classroom allows for complete and ‘care-free’ language acquisition.
From concrete to abstract

The mathematics materials allow the child to evolve from concrete manipulation to abstract understanding. A variety of objects such as beads, rods, spindles, cards and counters are used until the child has not just learnt a skill but has also understood the abstract concept behind it.

In the Children’s House children start with numeration up to ten. Over the three-year period the child eventually works with materials allowing them to go up to 9999. Beautiful ‘golden beads’ give the value and the symbols thus allowing the child to perform all four operations in a concrete manner. Mathematical concepts can be fascinating when acquired in such a way. The child discovers what addition really means when working together with two other friends. They put their quantities together on one big tray. Then count how much they have and find out the answer to the literal addition!
Exploring the world

Young children initially absorb the world through their senses. They develop a mental order by actively seeking to sort, arrange and classify their life experiences. The sensorial materials help children in doing just that in a refined manner. They gain knowledge about colours, shapes, geometric solids, land and water forms, types of leaves, globes and continent puzzles. The topography puzzles are a good example of Dr. Montessori’s idea of indirect preparation. Whilst putting the ‘puzzle’ together, children develop a motor-memory on the location of the countries. Country pieces are picked up by a knob, which are not centrally placed but situated at the location of the capital city! At a later stage, when children learn the names of these cities, they will have no trouble finding them! By gradually building a child’s knowledge through indirect preparation the student approaches new skills with an open mind; they do not develop a ‘block’ since half of the information is known already. This is a great boost for self-esteem and joy in learning.

Language work extends in areas such as science, geography, history, botany and the arts. Folders with classified cards, experiments and boxes with objects from other countries help expand the child’s vocabulary, knowledge on their surrounding world and allow for reading and writing activities. Beautiful projects are made in small or large groups.

Independence and responsibility

Practical life activities such as food preparation, cleaning up, putting flowers in a vase to decorate the classroom and washing the dirty placemats after lunch provide a link between the child’s home environment and the classroom. The children use familiar implements that give them a sense of belonging and allow making an important contribution to the group. The materials capture the child’s attention and stimulate the child to concentrate. The activities also appeal to the child’s will and lead to a greater physical skill and perfection of movement, thus helping the integration of the body and the mind. Children work uninterrupted at their own pace. This typically results in feelings of satisfaction and confidence.
Respectful social development

Activities are set up in such a way that children can actively be involved with other children and become responsible for their own actions. Lunch preparation is part of our ‘Food for Thought’ programme. One child bakes the bread, another cuts the carrots, and another grates the cheese or slices the eggs. These items all combined constitutes the lunch for the day. The children serve each other, wait for each other and then enjoy the food prepared together! Respect develops when it is lived. Positive interaction, doing things for each other, cleaning up so that the next person can also have a nice start and learning positive language that stimulates finding solutions are some of the small experiences that contribute to the development of a contributing member.

Every child is different!

A well functioning and well-rounded person has had the chance, right from the start, to develop and improve his/her particular strengths and challenges. Therefore each component of the person requires unique attention on a daily basis. Individualised education allows each person to develop to their full potential!

Academics, social and emotional development, music, and fine and gross motor activities all form an integrated part of the day. Joy and seriousness are combined. The children love singing together, playing percussion instruments, and dancing or listening to a performance. Gross motor activities are done both inside and outside. Equipment such as balancing beams, beanbags, balls, trampolines and mats are used.

By paying attention to all aspects of each unique personality, each child can become happy, develop a great self-esteem and love for learning!
The Primary (Elementary) Programme
Help me to learn to think by myself!

The aim of Montessori education is to foster competent, responsible, contributing and flexible citizens who are lifelong learners.

At the Primary age, children are specifically sensitive to the acquisition of knowledge and are very interested in the world at large. Consequently, a vast curriculum is offered. Children can start using their newly acquired skills of writing and reading to pursue topics of their interest. This gives them a feeling of, “Wow, there is so much for me to explore and learn!” The older Primary child poses many questions that are traditionally reserved for Secondary school. Our curriculum allows for this and, as a result, our students are exposed to many topics which their peers will not see for one or two more years.

Furthermore a large developmental step in emotional maturation and personal responsibility is made. With the aid of scientifically developed materials, exactly matching the child’s stage of development, and reciprocal relationship with teachers, the educational approach is individualised for each student’s needs. When a student is supported in such manner, a new level of creative and logical thinking surfaces. Children leave Primary with the ability to articulate the interdependencies of the world. This translates into a respectful, empathetic, and appreciative approach to themselves and to others.
Catering to different learning styles

Every child is different. At the Primary age, children are learning about their personal set of strengths and challenges and are stimulated to appreciate who they really are. They can live their strengths and at the same time receive assistance in developing all-round skills. Teachers adapt presentations to the learning style of the child and lessons are given in different settings. Individual, small group and large group settings are used thus assisting academic learning and social development.

Personalised education

Learning occurs in an inquiring, cooperative and nurturing atmosphere. Students increase their own knowledge through teacher-initiated experiences and autonomous work. The Montessori materials help the student to move from concrete manipulation to abstract understanding. To assist interest, concentration and motivation, children can work at their level and pace.
Positive attitude towards school and learning

Multi-age Group

Each group consists of a multi-age range thus providing academic stimulation and opportunities of social development. Children learn so much from each other! They work on different topics and at different levels, thereby motivating others as they see a variety of work happening at the same time. Due to the multi-age range, children do not see each other as competition but as supporters and helpers. In order to assist the development of self-esteem, children are only compared to themselves. They are always stimulated to do the best they can. They are not compared to each other. Teachers provide this positive environment and they approach learning in a collaborative manner.

Good Self-esteem

By paying attention to the child’s learning style and unique set of strengths and weaknesses, children feel at ease. They can feel that the environment and the teachers cater for their needs. There are no unnecessary hurdles, anxiety does not develop and the children are consequently free in their mind to concentrate. This is the basis for feeling good about oneself! A good self-image influences all levels of thinking and acting. Joy in learning is one of the products of this interaction.
Challenging academics

In order to meet the Primary children’s thirst for knowledge, the Montessori curriculum is vast and wide. The child is ready to explore the abstract world and has a great eye for detail. Guided by imagination, the children are able to connect the past and the present and to foresee the future. The learning materials in a Montessori school have been designed to provide a wide variety of learning experiences. Maps, charts, timelines, library books, etymology and story telling are some of the powerful tools and objects used to trigger further interest and research.

Integrated curriculum

Subjects are interwoven and help to develop an overall picture of the world. For example, if a child studies Africa, the continent is looked at from different points of view—botany, zoology, ecology, anthropology, history and geography are all interrelated. Through integration children learn to see interdependencies. This, compared to isolated subject studies, gives a much better base to understanding and logical thinking. Learning to see issues from different points of view enhances decision making and problem solving.

Of course classrooms do not contain all answers. Children are encouraged to go on outings and excursions in relation to their topics of study. With the help of the teachers, they plan the excursions and make necessary arrangements. This ‘going-out’ programme provides valuable experiences in organisation, cooperation, execution and communication skills.

Conscious awareness of one’s own functioning evolves by means of children discussing their progress with the teachers. For this they keep a diary, which is also the base for self-evaluation and reflection. Children are helped in becoming responsible for and managing their own development. Parents are kept up-to-date by means of progress report meetings.
Multilingualism and multiculturalism

Being able to speak several languages allows for cultural understanding and respect. Our world is becoming a global community. In order to function well, holistic second language learning is a must. The Primary students coming from the Children’s Houses have acquired the second language at a verbal level and can read in their first language. They will now learn the second language at a written level as well. This is done through presentations with the language materials, stories, poems and work within all other subjects. The written language now becomes a tool to be used in exploring the world as a whole. The child’s vocabulary will increase and they will thus move from being technical readers to total readers in several languages.

Different cultures and related living conditions, religions, habits and values are studied, thereby focusing on the celebration of cultural diversity and respect.

The Primary child is developing their moral convictions and is sensitive to what is good and bad, right and wrong. Their emerging reasoning power gives them the possibility to analyze social relationships.

To stimulate this, Primary child has the opportunity to:
- Research different aspects of human interactions
- Work in a variety of settings
- Work within a multi-age range
A healthy and respectful concept of justice is born at this age together with understanding the needs of others.
Conflict resolution

Primary children are ready to move out of the protective environment of the family and become part of other groups. They have an urge to develop a social identity. The unconscious questions, ‘Who am I in this group?’ and ‘What role should I play?’ need a platform. This is the time when more apparent ‘child size’ conflict situations happen between children. Together with their strong sense of right and wrong, logical reasoning evolves and values slowly take shape. These processes are guided by the teachers and are very important practice rounds in conflict resolution and problem solving. This is also why the teachers are outside during play-time and can spot these opportunities of growth. Constructive real life situations are needed before the child enters their teens and becomes part of society with its related challenges.

Developing an identity in the group

During the flow of the school day children work in small and large groups and work with various children on different topics. They are therefore living in a very rich social structure. Thanks to the international character of the school the children are additionally exposed to different cultures, ways of thinking and doing! Through observation, interaction and discussions the teachers guide the process of socialisation. Discussions in groups help clarify different opinions and children learn to see matters from different points of view. This gives food-for-thought and helps children to become flexible and adaptable.
Development of responsibility and moral values

Children learn through well-structured tasks and autonomous work and play. On the playground, they practise forming groups, establishing rules and developing values acceptable to all. The children are involved in a variety of movement activities such as organised sports, circus skills, informal games, and gardening. All of these activities provide the children opportunities to become responsible and respectful members of the school community.
Secondary education
International Baccalaureate Middle Year
Success depends on self-confidence!

The Middle Years Programme is an authorised programme of the International Baccalaureate Organisation. Students successfully completing this programme receive an IB MYP certificate at the end of Year 5.

The MYP section is housed together with the Diploma Programme section in the beautiful ‘Hof Kleinenberg’ farm which consists of open learning environments, state-of-the-art Apple computers, electronic touch screens, a science laboratory, a library, and an outdoor space used for games, sports, gardening and animal care, all of this in a historic and aesthetic setting.

We find that secondary students thrive well in open-space educational set-ups. The students work in small groups alongside their mentors and specialists who provide individualised attention to their needs. They are helped to reflect on their own functioning, work on their strengths and challenges and continue to build on their self-esteem, respect for others and sense of responsibility. Thus helping them to become strong people who can make strong decisions for the good of everyone.
A positive feeling of self worth

Young adolescents want to explore society while at the same time search for meaning in their life. They need to feel good about themselves and the work they do. This positive feeling of self-worth translates into positive behaviour towards the outside world. For this to happen, they need a learning environment with the following criteria:

- Teachers who serve as personal mentors, helping adolescents develop by themselves for themselves
- Specialists that are positive, flexible and open-minded adult role models to share and relate their ideas
- Individualised programmes, which allow students to work at their personal level, versus an average level. Students are then able to move forward at their own pace, whether in a quick or deliberate manner.
- Small groupings to encourage personal contacts. This builds team and leadership skills and results in academic excellence.

Our vision throughout the school is to assist children in their development to become independent and self-thinking individuals who work to create a better world for themselves and for others.

The IB organisation states it beautifully as to ‘develop internationally minded people who, recognising their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world’. Mario Montessori verbalised it in giving to children the appropriate information and experiences so that they recognise the past, learn to understand today’s society and have the possibility to visualise and contribute to the future. This holistic concept is embodied at International Montessori by valuing and promoting international mindedness, an integrated curriculum, and providing multi-age groupings on a small scale. This approach stimulates the development of empathy, critical thinking, urge to learn and respect for differences.
Formal of identity

The adolescent years mark a radical change in their development. During this transitional stage they undergo intellectual and physical changes. They are in search of the adult version of themselves and forming their individual identity. It is not inherent, as is commonly believed, for teenagers to be negative or apathetic. But this can be the result when an adolescent is related to in a way not in accordance with their inner developmental needs. We see the integrity of this age, their reflections and their urge to help the world ahead!

Collaborative Community

Respect and responsibility do not develop in a vacuum. A positive psychological environment is created that contains freedoms and logical limits. Students are asked to help each other. The message is that you grow when you can teach someone else. The traditional habit of ‘shielding’ your work from others is not practised. This habit does not help anyone in his or her professional career. In the Middle Years Programme, children develop skills they need in the future: collaboration, assisting and explaining to others, communicating and so on. These are skills that are essential during and after university life!
Learning in the real world

Together with the students, opportunities are created in becoming active participants in society. Several of these projects fall under the heading Community projects, Action and Service. Projects change over the years, thus offering a variety of experiences. The objective is to encourage and enable students to:

- Take action in applying what they are learning in school in the outside world
- Apply their knowledge and skills to wider and more global concepts
- Develop respect for others’ viewpoints and appreciate alternative solutions to problems
- Develop organisation and communication skills, collaborating skills, leadership techniques, care for others and an attitude of service when the situation requires

Within the school community:

Students receive first-hand experiences by means of a multitude of services given to the school community. These services range from catering at school social functions, providing the decoration and catering at the yearly Christmas market, earning money through car washes (and administering the related bookkeeping), organising guided tours and excursions, and caring for and mentoring younger children at holiday camps. These real-world activities all contribute to the student’s development in empathy, communication, team skills and responsibility.
The Middle Years Programme students cook lunches regularly; for themselves, for other students in the school and sometimes also for the parents. Therefore they need to purchase, manage the inventory, and do the necessary financing and related bookkeeping. Meaningful work creates necessary skills and independence.

In the wider world:

Students also interact with the community at large. One of their activities is organising events for the residents of the local retirement home. They initiate music and drama performances, art and craft activities and provide the full organisation of these events. This ‘real-life learning’ helps young adolescents become more and more conscious of the world. They see that in order to become constructive members of society, it is fundamental to act as responsible ‘producers’.

The MYP students take part in ‘Roots and Shoots’ projects. This ecological programme is initiated by the Jane Goodall foundation and stimulates youth to identify local problems and do something about it. With each group of young people acting locally, together they make a difference across the globe.

In line with their environmental awareness, the project ‘Rent a Christmas Tree’ is one of the MYP initiatives. They currently grow 40 pine trees that are potted just before Christmas and leased out to families. Instructions and a hand-made Christmas activity book accompany the tree for the children. Once the festive season is over, the trees are collected and returned to the soil.

By living in the heart of Europe, we find ourselves in a unique situation. It allows the students to have excess to policy makers and let their ‘voice’ be heard in the wider context of the European Union by attending conferences and workshops, thus assisting multicultural awareness and respect in a framework of cultural diversity.
The curriculum

Skill-based learning through a solid curriculum gives a wonderful start to a professional future. The curriculum is very thorough and once the Diploma Programme level is finalised, offers an entry in just about any university worldwide.

There are eight subject groups that are strongly related to each other and linked to the ‘real’ world, which students learn within global contexts. Conceptual understanding develops by means of interdisciplinary guiding questions; everything that the students see in class is connected to the society in which they live. They can start to understand the world at large and learn to see the connections and interdependencies. Consequently they can find their own place and purpose.

Language and Literature

Students study their mother tongue or language they know best whilst being abroad at a thorough level. The chosen language can be English or French. Students read, analyse and compare various texts from informal to formal sources. These range from magazines, newspapers, essays, and literature. They study grammar, visual communication in films, advertisement, and various periodicals. They write texts in a variety of styles and learn to perform critical comparisons and synthesis of information. On an oral level, they deliver presentations and speeches with the use of various tools including electronic media.

Language Acquisition

Second languages

Students find themselves in an international community, with sometimes 14 nationalities in one class. Speaking second languages becomes an automatism and is a tool in discovering other cultures, learning about other people and thereby developing respect and enjoyment of diversity. Beside the study of English and French language, Dutch, German and Spanish are on offer as second languages. These are taught in a dynamic and varied way, and are integrated in real life contexts.

Students work at different levels depending on their history of multiple language exposure and acquisition. New students can start at foundation level and students who attended the Montessori Primary bilingual programme move from standard to advanced level.

Individuals and Societies

Interdisciplinary project work includes human history, geography, philosophy and the sciences. The subjects are integrated which results in students becoming able to approach a topic from different points of view. Students practice critical and logical thinking based on important academic knowledge. Literature, essays, research documents, presentations and exposition of work are some forms of the visual outcome of the internal processes.

Learning to see society and the world at large from different viewpoints is the key to logical thinking and sound decision making. Sustainable progress is only possible when the decision makers think globally and are international minded. The new leaders are shaped today!
Mathematics

The course extends from arithmetic knowledge to algebra, geometry, trigonometry, statistics, probability to discrete mathematics. Students deal with all aspects that appear in traditional curricula and additionally are exposed to applied maths focusing on opportunities for real world problem solving. Students learn to use inductive and deductive reasoning when solving problems. They develop mathematical curiosity and abstract, logical and critical thinking skills.

Knowledge and understanding allow students to interpret results, and use mathematical reasoning when solving problems. Students are challenged to recognise patterns and structures and to explain their reasoning. This process supports inquiry-based learning skills. By using mathematical communication with its different forms of representation, students learn to convey their findings and reasoning effectively, both orally and in writing. Reflection provides the students the opportunity to look at their processes and evaluate the significance of their findings in connection to real-life contexts.

Multilingualism

The International Baccalaureate Secondary section is a multilingual programme with an international student and teacher population. Students work in small groups in an open class setting with several teaching stations. Subjects are presented by a teacher who generally uses one language during the presentation. Depending on the subjects and topics, the follow-up work can be done in English or French, thus advancing the multilingual skills. Simultaneously Dutch, German, Spanish, French and English are present as language advancement subjects. Students choose languages with the help of the MYP coordinator and in line with their language background and experiences.
Sciences: Physics, Chemistry and Biology

The adolescent wants to contribute. Through participation in real work they create a sense of belonging and add value to society. The theory demanded in order to do their work is brought to life in the different subjects, also in the sciences of biology, chemistry and physics.

Science is a discipline in which students are exposed to scientific knowledge and learn to apply it in order to construct scientific explanations of phenomena found around them. Experimental work and investigation is used to develop the logical and critical mind. There is emphasis on the awareness of the ethical, social, economic, political, cultural and environmental implications of the practice and use of science and technology as seen today in society.

Design

Inquiry and problem solving are important aspects of the MYP. Students practice in thinking creatively and find innovative and authentic solutions by using the design cycle and varying practical skills in making prototypes.

The work starts with a question that requires creative thinking and an answer in the form of a product or system. First the student investigates solutions. Then sketches several different possibilities and plans all aspects such as materials, parts, how it will function, aesthetics and construction techniques. After explaining the best alternative to the group, the student creates the actual prototype and evaluates the result according to a specific set of criteria.

Within design students practice in combining knowledge and experiences and create innovative solutions. This way of thinking helps the student to look at a challenge from multiple points of view and find innovative solutions.
Arts: Visual, Performance and Music

The students discover themselves and build concentration and self-confidence through the use of different forms of art. Adolescents need time and place to be expressive and creative. The environment includes theatre, dance, music, drama, art, craft, drawing, poetry and creative writing. Modes of self-expression are exhibited through oral presentations, meetings, visual displays, video recording, theatre productions, journaling and interviewing others.

Art classes help develop students’ artistic creativity as well as an awareness of their talents. Visual arts lessons give the students an opportunity to learn about the history of art as well as developing practical skills to express themselves and their ideas. They explore through a variety of themes and learn to interpret in an artistic manner.

All students play a musical instrument and can choose between violin, piano and guitar. Music specialists give individual or small groups lessons on a weekly basis. Students also form bands and choirs depending on and related to their drama performances and music initiatives.

Physical and Health education

Sports, gymnastics, circus activities and games allow for individual motor development, skill coordination and team participation. Its primary aims are to encourage the development of “intelligent performers” and to stimulate students in understanding the importance of a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

The objectives of teaching and learning physical education are several. Teachers encourage students to work to their optimal level, become aware of movement as a creative medium, to develop enjoyment, social skills, collaborative behaviour and the motor skills necessary to participate successfully in a variety of physical activities, and to learn to reflect upon physical activity in both a local and intercultural context.

A sports committee, made up of MYP students and their sports teachers, establishes each academic year the different sports that will be played. They also organise sport hall facilities, fields, equipment, transport and parent communication.

Self Study and Assessment Practice

To further develop independent study habits, from Year 1 MYP onwards, students perform regular homework tasks. In order to become successful at this, they require a quiet study place and sufficient time set aside at home that is ‘protected’ by necessary limits and parental support.

In the MYP, regular IB assessments are performed and are a good continuation from the study reflections done by students in Primary. These assessments are criterion-referenced, not norm-referenced. This method of assessment judges each student in relation to previous identified standards rather than against the work of other students. The assessment criterion varies, based on the task at hand and can include collaboration, communication, content, style, spelling and/or presentation skills. Criteria are discussed beforehand and the students know which aspects they are working and progressing on.

In order to provide a shared ownership of the assessment process and results, the students have regular consultations with the home teachers and the subject teachers. These discussions and reflective moments stimulate the teenagers in their further development, including, awareness of their own functioning, independent study habits, collaboration and responsibility.
The two final years
International Baccalaureate Diploma
The key is provided and by means of personal effort students can open the door to the future!

The International Montessori School is an authorised International Baccalaureate World School, and offers complete Secondary education made up of both the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme.

Montessori education is very compatible to this world wide recognised form of Secondary education. Students entering our school at a young age are in the fortunate position to complete both their Primary and Secondary education in an ongoing individualised and international fashion.

Entry diploma to university

After graduating from Year 5 of MYP, students can enter the Diploma Programme. This final two-year section of Secondary education is for motivated and dedicated students aged 16 and up. The diploma grants entry to university.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma is an accepted and highly accredited entry diploma to universities worldwide. Students who work well and earn this diploma with good marks will be able to take their pick of national and international universities!
Aesthetic surroundings
Beautiful and aesthetic surroundings assist in the learning process.

A classroom does not need to be a square box with nothing more than an interactive whiteboard, tables, chairs and some posters. Beautiful surroundings give energy. Energy is what Diploma students need since they have two years of serious work ahead of them. The Secondary students have to their disposition:

- Large open style classroom settings
- IT equipment - iMac technology
- Multi-functional spaces with:
  - Visual arts section: easels, paint, clay, oven, pottery wheel, sewing machines and much more
  - Performing arts area with a stage, microphones, light, sound and costumes
  - Teaching and mentoring space
- Nature, fields and gardens
- Outdoor space for games, music and socialising
- Library
- Science Lab and equipment necessary for field studies
- Kitchens and catering equipment

Planning for the future
Students receive help from their mentors in choosing their subjects within the range offered at the school. This is done according to the students’ passion in certain topics, the level of performance in the subjects and plans for the future. Parents can attend information sessions to become more knowledgeable on the choice available, the subject content and the level required. Families can also talk with the mentors and IB DP coordinator before confirming the choice in writing.

The IB Diploma Programme continues to help students develop a positive attitude towards learning and the skills needed to assist them in higher education and life beyond. The student is nurtured in becoming a lifelong learner! The key is provided and with their personal effort they can open the door to the future!
Small groups
Diploma Programme students thrive well in small-scale educational set-ups. They are assisted in their development to become independent and self-thinking individuals who become responsible for themselves and others. This can only be put into practice when students are not a number in a large group, but an important collaborator in small group settings.

In addition to the lessons, students receive individualised monitoring and work within a reciprocal relationship with the teachers. This allows them to develop knowledge and skills for future learning and professional success such as communication, collaboration and decisions making.

Subject Choices
The IB Diploma Programme entails three core elements and six subjects. One subject is to be chosen from each Subject Group, which includes two languages:
- Studies in language and literature
- Language acquisition
- Individuals and Societies
- Mathematics
- Sciences
- The Arts: visual and performing arts

Besides the two language groups, subjects are predominantly given in the English language, therefore a good command of English is required.

The Diploma Programme students choose a subject from each of these six groups. Three subjects are taken at higher level (240 teaching hours), while the other three subjects are taken at Standard Level (150 teaching hours).

The subjects ensure a wealth of information and a wide experience, thereby ensuring that students do not specialise too early and consequently become limited in their future choices.
The core elements

The Diploma Programme continues to put emphasis on the development of the whole personality and therefore offers a wide base of experiences. Besides solid academic knowledge, students continue to use and further develop their skills necessary for the present and for future success. The three core requirements are included to broaden the educational experience and challenge students to apply their knowledge and understanding.

1) The Creativity, activity, service programme

This holistic education has at its core the Creativity, activity, service programme (CAS). Students take initiative and complete community based projects with the idea that producing and giving to the community is equally important to developing oneself. Whilst doing this, students have the opportunity to integrate their skills to a higher level and grow towards becoming responsible citizens.

2) Theory of Knowledge

TOK is another core element that builds upon reflections, philosophical discussions and debates held in the MYP. Students continue to practice thinking about thinking and reflecting on their process of learning. They learn how to apply knowledge and how to critically evaluate the abundance of information that comes to them. This interdisciplinary thinking is part of all subjects and also functions as a separate discussion forum.

3) The Extended Essay

The Extended Essay (EE) is the third core element. This is a wonderful opportunity to choose a topic the student is passionate about and wants to research at a deeper level. The EE is an independent and self-directed research. The student is guided in the process by a supervisor. The paper should be approximately 4,000 words. This work constitutes a solid preparation for processing information and synthesising knowledge into a research paper as required at tertiary level. It helps mature and further develop logical and critical thinking skills.
Working towards the diploma

The route to the Diploma can be one of intense growth and maturation. Due to the amount of subject material, essay writing and research, efficient self-study habits together with good time management skills are essential at this level. In order to go through these years in a balanced manner, students need sufficient time set aside for study, constructive limits, and support at home.

Mock exams are organised at intervals. The results of the mock exams are used to inform students of their level of competencies in the subject and are used as a basis for review and exam preparation.

The points needed to gain the Diploma are gathered through different kinds of assessments:
- Internal Assessment allows some of the student assessment to be carried out by teachers over the duration of the course.
- External Assessment refers to work that is conducted and overseen by teachers and then graded externally by examiners.
- Exams are conducted in strict accordance with IB regulations.

And then suddenly... the bird flies out of the nest! The small child has grown into a competent young adult and is ready to explore and contribute to the world at large!
It takes a village to
Every person plays an important role

Children become the product of the experiences in their lives. Most importantly, the people they interact with greatly influence their future view of themselves and the world at large. Children learn from everyone they meet. Therefore, the school functions as a ‘village that raises the child’. This village includes teaching staff, auxiliary staff, parents, and children.

We aim to create a harmonious atmosphere surrounding the children by offering optimal learning environments and additionally by providing links between the school and home environment. A broad selection of informative events, social happenings and family days are an integral part of the school year. All families receive an annual school events calendar that can help in planning and participation.

Informative events are organised throughout the year with the aim of spreading information on all aspects of child development. These sessions can help families acquire more knowledge on how to sustain their child’s progress at each level. At the same time, families meet each other and build on the village that raises their child!
Social events

Since many families are living far from home, and unfortunately have no extended family support, we hope to give some opportunities to connect to others and to find friendships. Through the school, parents can meet other families and start a new social life! To cater for working mum’s and dads, weekend and evening activities are organised such as:

• Concerts
• Sing-alongs
• Games days
• Craft evenings
• Christmas market
• ‘Old fashioned’ Farm days
• Mum’s and Dad’s mornings
• International cooking sessions
• Theatre performances by the Primary and Secondary students

Information sessions

Information evenings cover topics that can be related to a specific age-range, to a specific subject group or to show the evolution of acquisition. Also, ideas for the home environment are given. Some examples:

• The hands form the Brain
• The powerful absorbent mind
• Curriculum adapted to your child’s learning style
• Technology in your child’s life
• Introduction to the Secondary section
• Mathematics and Geometry for the ages 2 to 19
• Art, craft and music in the classroom
• Creating an optimal home environment for children
Parent participation

Many parents enjoy becoming directly involved in the school activities, and the children appreciate and gain from their participation. Parents are invited to inform the school about their availability and special interests. There are several ways in which parents offer assistance. Special hobbies, talents, skills, and interests can be shared. We have had parents come to the classroom to play a musical instrument, present artefacts from other cultures, cook or bake a specialty item or provide technical and mechanical expertise.

Assistance with various activities at the school are coordinated through the Heads of Schools. Parents assist regularly by serving as chaperones for fieldtrips, making of props and costumes, making of classroom material and helping in the library. In the past we have also had parents organise a Saint Martin’s lantern parade, volunteer at the Christmas market, coordinate a social wine tasting, or dinner and cultural event.

The Parent Café and Parent Library

The Parent Café is situated at the ‘Savoorke’ location in Tervuren and is a unique space reserved for parents. It is a meeting place for informal and formal occasions including markets, workshops, information sessions, and meetings.

Its opening hours are communicated through the newsletter and all parents of International Montessori are welcome. Friends and associates are also welcome to the Café for special events and information sessions.

Some topics covered during the Parent Café Coffee Mornings are: educational continuum, the work cycle, math in the preschool, integrated curriculum in Primary, art and craft ideas for families, international kitchen, what to do during the summer months, book suggestions and much more.

The Parent Library is situated in the Parent Café. We endeavour to have a good selection of books available to parents relating to the ages of birth to 18 years old. Montessori related books, as well as references specific to child development and parenting approaches, are available. The collection also includes books and magazines on Belgium and Brussels. All families of International Montessori can become a member. The Parent Library is open on the days when the Parent Café is open.
After School Hour Programme

The After School Hour programme is very popular. It is available on Wednesday afternoons and on other weekdays after 15.00 hrs. During these afternoons children are very busy with art, craft, games, construction materials, puzzles, occasional baking, eating a snack and playing outside. The educational approach continues of course and children are assisted in becoming social, independent and responsible.

School bus service

Children from the age of three years old and onwards can make use of the school bus service. The service is owned and managed by the school. A medium sized Mercedes bus and several Nissan and VW transporters with seat belts are used to do a door-to-door pick up where possible. Each van has its own driver, therefore young children feel confident and ready to use the service.

Holiday Camps

The school offers several holiday camp weeks a year. Each camp is organised around a specific topic and is run by professional staff from the school. In previous camps we have had topics on dinosaurs, the cultures of different continents, ancient Egyptians, artists, and the seasons. We take advantage of the good weather and do activities outside such as going on nature walks, playing with a splash pool, planting and maintaining the garden, and making collections of leaves, seeds, and wild flowers. Inside we cook and bake, do arts and crafts, sing and dance, make performances, and play games. These camps are very popular and enjoyed by all participators!
Music and Theatre

All children have the opportunity to be involved in music every day. They sing, play percussion instruments and dance. Toddlers and Children’s House children share their enthusiasm for music with their parents at an annual Sing-Along event.

For Primary and Middle Years Programme students our philosophy is an ‘instrument for every child’, giving them the choice of piano, violin, or guitar for their music instruction. As well, these students perform unique annual theatre productions with lots of acting, dancing, and singing. All of this is done without auditions and competitions. Students contribute by means of writing parts of the theatre production, making costumes, developing props, rehearsing songs and choreographing dances. All children are exposed to stage practice and performance in front of an audience.

This exposure can culminate in Diploma Programme students choosing Theatre as one of their Diploma subjects. These students study the different forms and styles theoretically and practically, with their own stage with sound and light to their disposal.

With related beautiful photographs, we close this introductory brochure on the International Montessori Schools and Child Development Centres, Brussels, Belgium. We hope you have enjoyed reading it!
Wish it, dream it, do it!
Children's House inspired by the Belgian artist Jean-Michel Folon

www.international-montessori.org
Phone: +32 (0)2 767 6360 / (0)2 721 2111
Brussels, Belgium