

# MONTESSORI LEARNING COMMUNITY

## FAQ'S

### **What's your mission?**

Elementary-aged children want social connection and interaction, and have a developmental need to work together. I'm happy to provide a beautiful environment for homeschoolers that nurtures their creativity and kindles new interests; a place where they feel motivated to learn from each other, from carefully prepared materials and activities, and from a caring adult guide.

### **What is the Montessori approach and why do you follow it?**

Instead of age-segregated and compartmentalized classes (e.g. math, biology, history) where an adult dictates how learning happens, Montessori invites children to be active participants in a mixed-age learning environment.

The Elementary Montessori approach revolves around dynamic small-group lessons based not on age or skill level, but on interest and need. Oral storytelling, hands-on materials, conversations, child-directed group or individual projects, child-planned field trips, visits from industry experts, community service, and nature exploration help children discover connections and meaning among all subjects of study.

Academic concepts become relevant when they're presented as keys to exploring, understanding, and communicating with the broader world. Children are given ample space and time to ask questions, follow their curiosities, make and fix mistakes, and experience flow.

Children at MLC will learn how to balance freedom and responsibility. They are guided to understand their individual learning style; take ownership of their learning process; find their passion and purpose; and discover how to share their



talents with their community. I honor and foster the elementary child's natural drives towards exploration, self-mastery, and collaboration.

### **Who is the MLC for?**

We welcome homeschooled children ages 5 - 10 who would benefit from a respectful and structured learning environment twice a week. Families who choose MLC are expected to be supportive of each child's personality and learning style, and are asked to model respect for teachers and make learning a priority at home. We encourage inclusivity and discourage competition and comparison. Additionally, parents who choose MLC must support religious and medical freedom.

### **Is your approach to Montessori secular?**

Yes. We study religions from historical and cultural perspectives and incorporate them into our lessons only when relevant to what we're studying (e.g. world mythology, the development of our modern calendar, etc.). I strive for diversity and inclusivity by welcoming people of different racial, ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds.

### **Does attending the learning community replace academic work done at home?**

No. My current focus is on cultural lessons and projects, as well as child-kindled explorations. Participation in these activities helps children understand the importance of learning and practicing foundational academic skills at home. Children will be given short lessons with math and language materials, and are supported if they need help using math and literacy skills while they work on a project, but I expect parents to continue supporting academic skills development at home. (Guidance is available for parents who request it.)



**\*\*Parents are responsible for making sure their children are meeting state academic standards. All participants must either be enrolled with a homeschool charter or have an active PSA.\*\***

## **Are parents expected to teach or be involved with the children during sessions?**

MLC is a ***drop-off program***. A Montessori learning community is different from a co-op because it's guided by a trained and experienced adult that connects the children with activities and materials that support their curiosities.

I recognize the importance of an education model based on partnerships and healthy attachments, and prioritize strong relationships with children, parents, and the local community. I value parents' knowledge of their children, invite their observations, and am willing to share my experience in the field of child development. Parents in our learning community are active supporters who are open to learning and growing, and willingly volunteer their time and expertise towards improving our community.

Parents can help by: making and repairing materials, shopping for supplies, picking up library holds, helping to supervise field trips, cleaning and preparing the environment, organizing parent workshops, and serving as industry experts to support the children's research. I also encourage parents to use the time their children are engaged in their work to further their own interests (or at least run a few errands!).



## **What's your approach to discipline?**

I offer a non-punitive approach to discipline that relies on connection, mutual respect, and the belief that "people do well when they can". The MLC is a safe space where children can learn empathy and collaborative problem-solving. We use Positive Discipline tools and Dr. Ross Greene's Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS) approach to turn mistakes and disagreements into powerful opportunities for personal development. Children learn to set and respect boundaries, take different perspectives, and communicate their needs peacefully. Above all, we know that when children are engaged in meaningful, purposeful, and challenging work, their compassionate nature shines through.

## What does a typical day look like?

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>10:00 - 10:10</b> | <i>drop-off</i>                             |
| <b>10:10 - 10:45</b> | <i>movement &amp; music + group meeting</i> |
| <b>10:45 - 1:15</b>  | <i>work time</i>                            |
| <b>1:15 - 2:00</b>   | <i>clean up and lunch + read-aloud</i>      |
| <b>2:00 - 2:55</b>   | <i>outdoor play and/or board games</i>      |
| <b>2:55 - 3:00</b>   | <i>pick-up</i>                              |

## What's your policy for computer/screen use?

Computer use is kept to a minimum, always supervised by an adult, and must be relevant to the children's work (e.g. to plan a field trip or place a hold on a library book). We always exhaust books and screen-free resources first. Older elementary children can use a computer to type up a final draft. Children are invited to keep personal electronics at home.

## How do I know what my child is learning? How can I support them at home?

Each week I'll email a brief outline of what the children explored, along with resources and ideas to continue the learning journey at home. I can also offer guidance by scheduling a phone call or in-person meeting.

## Do I have to use the Montessori curriculum and materials at home?

No. Montessori is compatible with many homeschooling philosophies, including unschooling, project-based learning, unit studies, and eclectic education. The activities I offer are designed for elementary-aged children of all abilities (including non-readers and children with learning differences). The materials we use will give your child a clearer and more grounded understanding of the world, and will make their academic work at home more relevant and meaningful.



If you would like to learn how to incorporate some of the Montessori materials and the Montessori philosophy at home, please let me know!

**Does my child have to attend every session in the learning period?**

For the benefit of the learning community, children should attend every session, arrive on time, and stay for the entire work cycle (unless a child is sick or traveling). We are above all a learning **community**, and as such, depend on the contributions and commitment of all the children. Our projects often span several days, and each child has a role to play in the group's success.

**Will my child be safe and well-cared for?**

Yes. I'm CPR and first-aid certified, and have 15 years of experience working with children in home and classroom settings. I'm also a parent and understand that safety is every parent's first priority. If your child does sustain an injury while playing or working, I'll follow first-aid procedures and notify you immediately.

**What do my fees pay for and do you take charter funds?**

Your fees and/or bartering contributions allow me to provide a beautiful and safe learning environment, while also compensating me for my experience, time, and effort. Field trips are billed separately. Parent volunteer hours allow me to keep our costs down. I don't currently accept charter funds.

If you have any questions, please email me at [pilar.bewley@gmail.com](mailto:pilar.bewley@gmail.com) or call me at 858-750-0447

I look forward to an amazing school year of growth and discovery!

*Pilar Bewley*