Montessori Country Day School’s Lower Elementary Curriculum
**Mission**

*Montessori Corner is committed to providing 21st Century educational excellence. Our individualized curriculum is designed to develop the whole child intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically and morally. Within our nurturing, multi-aged Montessori learning environments students are empowered to be competent, confident, collaborative, critical thinkers and encouraged to be passionate life-long learners and leaders within their local and global communities.*

**Vision**

*Sowing the Seeds of Knowledge and Creativity; Cultivating Academic Excellence, 21st Century Skills & Leadership*
AMS Code of Ethics

AMS requires that all member schools and affiliated teacher education programs agree to comply with the AMS Code of Ethics. AMS relies on self-compliance of this Code.
In pledging to accept the Code of Ethics, heads of schools and program directors agree that the educators in their institutions will strive to conduct themselves professionally and personally in ways that reflect their respect for one another and for the children they serve; and that they will do whatever is within their talents and capacity to protect the right of each child to have the freedom and opportunity to develop his or her full potential.

Principle I - Commitment to the Student
In fulfillment of the obligation to the children, the educator—
1. shall encourage independent action in the pursuit of learning;
2. shall protect the opportunity to provide for participation in educational programs without regard to race, sex, color, creed, or national origin;
3. shall protect the health and safety of students;
4. shall honor professional commitments and maintain obligations and contracts while never soliciting nor involving students or their parents in schemes for commercial gain;
5. shall keep in confidence information that has been secured in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

Principle II - Commitment to the Public
The Montessori educator shares in the responsibility for developing policy relating to the extension of educational opportunity for all and for interpreting educational programs and policies to the public.
In fulfilling these goals, the educator—
1. shall support the American Montessori Society and not misrepresent its policies in public discussion. Whenever speaking or writing about policies, the educator should take the precaution of distinguishing private views from the official position of the Society.
2. shall not interfere with nor exploit the rights and responsibilities of colleagues within the teaching profession.

Principle III - Commitment to the Profession
The Montessori educator makes efforts to raise professional standards and conditions to attract persons worthy of trust to careers in Montessori education.
In fulfilling these goals, the educator—
1. shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the Montessori education profession;
2. shall represent his or her own professional qualification with clarity and true intent;
3. shall apply for, accept, offer, recommend, and assign professional positions and responsibilities on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications;
4. shall use honest and effective methods of administering duties, use of time, and conducting business.
Middle States Association Code of Ethics

Mission Statement
The Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools, building on the rich history of the Middle States Association, aspire to improve the quality of education in the United States and around the world by assisting schools to achieve excellence through the process of accreditation, by affirming to the public a member school’s trustworthiness and commitment to continuous improvement, by providing the network and resources for the promotion of proven practices.

Belief Statements
We believe that:

- Education is important to the quality of life in our global society.
- All children deserve access to a quality education.
- All schools can achieve excellence in both teaching and learning through innovation.
- The process of self-assessment, external validation, and accountability is essential to school improvement.
- Achieving excellence through accreditation promotes a commitment to a shared vision of continuous improvement, diverse stakeholder support, and sustained effort over an extended period of time.
- Accreditation is a collaborative partnership grounded in professionally recognized and accepted research-based standards.

Profile of an Accredited School*
An accredited school:

- Adheres to the Middle States Standards for Accreditation;
- Uses its mission, beliefs, and goals as the basis for daily decision-making;
- Operates in the public interest and in accordance with ethical practice;
- Accepts responsibility for the level of performance of its students;
- Remains committed to continuous improvement in student learning and to its capacity to produce the levels of learning desired and expected by its community;
- Operates in a collegial and collaborative way with all of its stakeholders;
- Sustains its focus on implementing recommendations, addressing monitoring issues and correcting stipulations that may be part of its notification of accreditation and fulfills its maintenance requirements to the Commissions
Academic & Social Curriculum
Montessori Curriculum, Character Counts, 16 Habits of Mind

Maria Montessori’s timeless philosophy and methodology exemplifies the current considerations in preparing students for success in 21\textsuperscript{st} century learning and work environments. Our students achieve academic success, character education and the opportunity to develop and exercise “Habits of Mind” throughout their learning experiences at our Montessori Corner schools.

21\textsuperscript{st} Century Competencies

- Innovative & Practical Problem Solver
- Effective Communicator
- Collaborative Team Member
- Flexible & Self-Directed Learner
- Globally Aware, Active, & Responsible Student/Citizen
- Information Literate Researcher

Academic Success

How do they achieve academic success?
The Montessori curriculum, aligned with Common Core and Nobel Standards, provides a comprehensive learning experience that doesn’t rely on chronological age to determine the learning goals and outcomes. Each student is given an individualized learning plan that moves them thoughtfully and thoroughly through each academic strand. Students can move beyond the average expectation for their chronological peer group, allowing them to strive further and further towards higher levels of academic success. Students are also allowed to spend more time in areas that need additional opportunities for exploration and acquisition of skills and knowledge. What we find in our kindergarten and 3\textsuperscript{rd} grade graduates is the achievement of academic success at or beyond standard grade level learning standards. Coupled with character education and “Habits of Mind,” students are poised to step into their next learning experience as confident, competent leaders who work collaboratively with peers and teachers for their personal success and that of their class community.
Upon completion of our educational program, our students will have acquired comprehensive skills and knowledge in the following Academic areas:

- Practical Living Skills
- Sensory Discrimination; Skills and Knowledge
- Mathematics; Calculations, Geometry, and Measurement
- Literacy; Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing
- Geography; Physical and Political
- Natural Sciences; Botany, Zoology, and Physical Science
- History; US and Global

Character Does Count

How do they enhance their character?

Our learning environments are set up with natural boundaries for movement, socialization and behavior management. Individual and group needs are considered when developing the classroom learning zones and work spaces to allow for the development of pro-social skills and the building of self-regulation capabilities. Additionally, teachers use the character building program, Character Counts as a guide to support students’ development of deeper understandings of what goes into building personal character. The key ingredients are folded into 6 characters that, when nurtured and exercised, strengthen each student’s ability to positively participate in their current and future public and personal environments.

According to CharacterCounts.org:

“The Six Pillars of Character is a framework for teaching good character and is composed of six ethical values (characteristics) everyone can agree upon: Trustworthiness; Respect; Responsibility; Fairness; Caring; and Citizenship. Each of the six character traits are used within our CHARACTER COUNTS! program to help instill a positive learning environment for students and a “culture of kindness” making schools a safe environment for students to learn. The Six Pillars of Character values are not political, religious, or culturally biased.”

Upon completion of our educational program, our students will have acquired comprehensive skills and knowledge in the following Character areas:

- Caring
- Citizenship
- Fairness
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Trustworthiness
Habits of a 21st Century Thinker

What habits are cultivated during their school years at Montessori Corner schools?
As we ground ourselves in the 21st century we notice that those habits cultivated in a Montessori Corner classroom; founded in the Montessori philosophy and methodology, built 21st century skills and prepare students to be active contributors in their classrooms, homes and community. We notice that skills needed to collaborate, creatively and critically think, cooperate and contribute confidently are naturally supported through the Montessori curriculum and learning environments. Author Arthur Costa guides our thinking as we plan for and support the development of the problem-solving skills needed to successfully navigate the experiences each student has on campus and beyond the daily classroom lessons, community and enrichment activities.

Arthur Costa writes in *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind,*

“A Habit of Mind is a composite of many skills, attitudes, cues, past experiences, and proclivities.” There are at least 16 attributes displayed by human beings that when displayed suggest the use of our intellect in solving problems in our natural environments. They are referred to by author Arthur Costa as “Habits of Mind.” “They are the characteristics of what intelligent people do when they are confronted with problems, the resolutions to which are not immediately apparent. It means that we value one pattern of intellectual behaviors over another; therefore, it implies making choices about which patterns we should use at a certain time. It includes sensitivity to the contextual cues that signal that a particular circumstance is a time when applying a certain pattern would be useful and appropriate. It requires a level of skillfulness to use, carry out, and sustain the behaviors effectively. It suggests that after each experience in which these behaviors are used, the effects of their use are reflected upon, evaluated, modified, and carried forth to future applications.”

“When we no longer know what to do we have come to our real work, and when we no longer know which way to go we have begun our real journey. The mind that is not baffled is not employed. The impeded stream is the one that sings.” —Wendell Berry

Upon completion of our educational program, our students will have acquired comprehensive skills and knowledge in the following Habits of Mind:

The 16 Habits of Mind identified by Costa and Kallick are:

- Persisting
- Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision
- Managing impulsivity
- Gathering data through all senses
- Listening with understanding and empathy
- Creating, imagining, innovating
- Thinking flexibly
- Responding with wonderment and awe
- Thinking about thinking (metacognition)
- Taking responsible risks
- Striving for accuracy
- Finding humor
- Questioning and posing problems
- Thinking interdependently
- Applying past knowledge to new situations
- Remaining open to continuous learning
Lower Elementary Curriculum Overview

The Montessori Method is a universal and purposeful way to instruct children. The elementary curriculum exposes students to many interrelated topics that get introduced, investigated, exercised and expanded on in different ways throughout the three year cycle. Each time children learn about a topic they receive a new and deeper understanding about the topic. They gain a deeper understanding of the topic and, ultimately, make more meaningful connections about the subject. At the core of the elementary curriculum are the Five Great Lessons, which are stories that tell of how each particle, substance, species, and event have a special purpose and contribution to make. These five stories are: the origin of the universe, the coming of life, the coming of humans, the history of language, and the history of math. The Five Great Lessons are the guiding framework in the elementary classroom; all lessons taught can be connected back to these stories, creating an integrated curriculum. By starting with the whole picture (history of the universe) and then adding detail with each lesson, children can contextualize their learning so it becomes more meaningful.

Cosmic Education and the Five Great Lessons

Montessori saw the second plane of development (ages 6 to 12) as a time to open up the universe to children. She did this in the form of the Five Great Lessons. Rather than teaching the curriculum as separate parts, the Great Lessons provide a holistic view of various combined disciplines. The Great Lessons teach children how everything began and contributed to our universe. Children receiving these lessons learn to be grateful to previous generations because they have benefited from their knowledge and contributions. This gratitude and appreciation carries into other parts of their life and they gain a sense of importance, purpose, and responsibility.

The Five Great Lessons are a part of Montessori’s Cosmic Education. Cosmic Education helps each student find their own path in the universe. It is the child’s cosmic task to find out their purpose and contributions. To truly do this, we must understand ourselves. To do that you must also understand the world around us. This begins to happen when children understand their place in the universe, relationship with other living species, and cultural diversity. In the elementary years the child begins to answer the question, “Who am I?” Through each lesson; math, language, culture, and practical life, students build their knowledge and capacity to understand their immediate and global communities and how they can be successful citizens by learning and developing in their Montessori classroom.
Language

Montessori classrooms are very language rich. There is reading, writing, speaking and listening experiences woven into every area of the classroom and curriculum. The language area in the lower elementary classroom hones in on the important concepts and skills students need to practice as they develop fluency in all areas associated with literacy. When Maria and Mario Montessori were creating the language curriculum, they focused on grammar, mechanics, punctuation, capitalization, word study, and sentence analysis. In grammar, children are exposed to noun, verb, adjective, article, preposition, adverb, conjunction, pronoun, and interjection before third grade. They are taught to recognize and symbolize these parts of speech. They also learn that sometimes words can be different parts of speech depending on how the word is used in the sentence. Children develop a deep understanding for grammar in the Montessori elementary program. They will also learn about all of the mechanic marks, such as: period, question mark, exclamation mark, quotations, comma, apostrophes, and hyphens. These are not only important to know about, but children must also learn when to use them in their writing. The children review the many situations when you capitalize and abbreviate words. There is also a section of the Montessori language curriculum called word study. This area teaches children about compound words, antonyms, synonyms, contractions, homophones, and homographs. This curriculum strand teaches the child a concept while broadening their vocabulary. Sentence analysis helps children break down the parts of a sentence, in turn, making them better writers.

We use the Writer’s Workshop method to develop students’ writing skills. This is the writing program that we will use to teach the children the fundamentals of writing. It is broken down into five areas of writing. Small Moment writing is descriptive writing. The child will write fiction stories based on their own lives and learn to stretch the story with details. Persuasive writing will teach the child how to be convincing. They will also learn how to write a letter. How-to writing is another area of the writing curriculum. Examples of how-to or procedural writing are recipes and directions. Children must be detail oriented and describe each step so their readers are successful at the task. Poetry teaches a child how to use literary devices and figurative language. Informational writing is another area of the writing experience that is characterized by non-fiction text. The child learns how to write reports and essays during this time. Students will receive direct and indirect experiences that exercise their writing skills. Initial and follow-up lessons in all curriculum areas may require copying, summarizing, and analyzing that are documented through writing.
The reading program that we use at MCDS is called Reading Street. It is aligned with the common core standards and is a multi-pronged program that teaches: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. There are also online components to this program. This program uses fiction and non-fiction texts to teach many different skills. Parts of this program will be completed at school and others parts will be done for homework.

The spelling rule program we will be using is called Instructional Spelling. It teaches children spelling rules. Each spelling rule will be taught on Monday and then throughout the week the children will do different activities with the words for homework. There will be a weekly spelling test on Friday. It is good for the students to get comfortable taking tests and it’s a perfect time to practice writing different types of sentences!

Oral speaking and presentation skills will be practiced in the lower elementary classroom. The children will present their research findings to other students and parents, read to younger students, greet guests and parents at events, and participate in plays and musical presentations.

1. **Written language**
   a. The History of Language- Written
   b. Composition
      i. Sentences
      ii. Paragraphs
      iii. Poems
      iv. Informational writing (reports)
         1. Use of resources such as the dictionary, thesaurus, books, internet
      v. Persuasive writing
     vi. Letter writing
      vii. How to (procedural writing)
      viii. Stories (fiction and non-fiction)
   c. Handwriting (print and cursive)
   d. Word processing
      i. Learn to use keyboard

2. **Spoken Language**
   a. The History of Language- Oral
b. Discussions

c. Oral presentations

d. Sharing work

e. Greeting families and friends at events

f. Read/give lesson to younger student

3. Grammar
   a. Noun - singular and plural, masculine and feminine, proper and common,
      concrete and abstract, collective
   b. Adjective
   c. Article - indefinite and definite
   d. Verb - helping verbs, past, present and future tense lessons
   e. Preposition
   f. Conjunction
   g. Adverb
   h. Pronoun
   i. Interjection
   j. Logical agreement lessons
   k. Transposition lessons
   l. Irregular possessives

4. Word Study
   a. Alphabetizing
   b. Classification
   c. Compound words
   d. Antonyms
   e. Synonyms
   f. Suffix
   g. Prefix
   h. Homophone
   i. Homonym
   j. Homograph

5. Mechanics/Capitalization
a. Period  
b. Question mark  
c. Exclamation mark  
d. Commas- noun in series, address, date, appositive  
e. Apostrophe- for contraction, singular/plural possessive  
f. Quotation marks- around speaking, for titles  
g. Hyphen  
h. A sentence  
i. A phrase  
j. Phrases make a sentence  
k. Sentences make a paragraph  
l. Capitalize- first word in sentence, “I,” days of week and months of year, geographical locations, people, structures, brands, events, titles, holidays  
m. Abbreviation- days of week and months of year, titles, geographic locations,  

6. **Sentence Analysis** (starts in 2nd grade)  
   a. Predicate  
   b. Subject  
   c. Direct object  
   d. Indirect object
**Mathematics**

Montessori math focuses on the process rather than the product during the initial introduction to a mathematical concept using the beautifully crafted Montessori didactic material. With ample practice with materials, students can perfect their knowledge and skills, leading them to more abstract mathematical calculations and thinking.

The story of math, which is the last great lesson, helps children understand how long it took for humans to invent the idea of counting and number representation. Concepts are first shown with the Montessori material. Once children can visualize the problem, they may shift to abstraction. We will work on operations and math facts. The children will also get quizzed in math facts a few times a week. In geometry, the children use concrete materials that build an understanding of shapes and space. The Montessori geometry curriculum has a lot of lessons and depth, as children get older because she believed that children naturally notice shapes in their world. The lessons begin easy by naming different shapes and continue into the parts, angles and area of different shapes. We also teach time, money, measurement, graphing, and fractions through Montessori lessons and work. We give the children as much real world experience with these topics as possible to enhance and deepen their understanding. Other math concepts and skills from national math standards have also been added to the curriculum to make sure that our children are exposed to the concepts and verbiage being used on the national level to ensure students success as 21st century learners.

1. **Numeration and Concepts for Numbers**
   a. The Story of Numbers
   b. Whole numbers from 1 to 1,000 (sequence and place value)
   c. Ordinal numbers
   d. Number lines- positive and negative numbers
   e. Odd and even numbers
   f. Greater than, less than, equal to
   g. Commutative and associative properties
   h. Properties of zero
   i. Hierarchies (formation, reading, and writing numbers to 1,000,000)
   j. Rounding to the nearest 10, 100, 1,000
   k. Estimation
2. Whole Number Operations
   a. Static and dynamic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
   b. Memorization of math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division)
   c. Fact families and inverse operation

3. Multiples and Factoring
   a. Table of multiples
   b. Divisibility
   c. Prime numbers

4. Power of Numbers
   a. Squares and cubes
   b. Square roots
   c. Power of two and three

5. Fractions and Decimals
   a. Identifying fractions to 1/10
   b. Comparing equivalent fractions
   c. Adding, subtracting, multiplying by a whole number and dividing a whole number

6. Time
   a. Telling time to the hour, half an hour, fifteen minutes, five minute, minute
   b. Clock lingo (quarter till, quarter past, etc.)
   c. Elapsed time
   d. Tell time on an analog and digital clock
   e. Am and Pm
   f. Time word problems

7. Money
   a. Identify coins
   b. Add money up to equal a dollar
   c. Identifying dollar bills
   d. Adding money over a dollar
   e. Operations with money
f. Money word problems

8. Geometry
   a. Attributes
   b. 3d solids
   c. Point, line, solid, plane
   d. Triangle, polygon, quadrilateral, and curved figure drawer
   e. Box of sticks
   f. Lines- Introduction to a line, parts of a line and ray, relationship of a line to a plane, relationship between two lines, position of line in space
   g. Angles- Introduction, types of angles, types of adjacent angles, measurement of an angle, alternate and corresponding angles,
   h. Triangle- Parts of a triangle, types of a triangle, sides and angles of a triangle, detective triangle box,
   i. Area and perimeter
   j. Parts of a quadrilateral, trapezoid, parallelogram, rectangle and a rhombus.
   k. Use of tools (ruler, compass, protractor)

9. Measurement
   a. Volume
   b. Weight
   c. Temperature
   d. Length

10. Word Problems
    a. One and two step problems using all operations
Cultural

The cultural studies in the Montessori classroom are the main focus of the classroom. There are four main topics under the heading of culture: botany, zoology, history, and geography. Botany is the study of plants and the children learn about their parts and types. They gain an appreciation for plants and begin acting as stewards of the earth by taking care of plants. In history, children begin to understand time. They make their own timelines and begin to understand the time and events that happened in the past and what may be ahead in the future. They learn about people that came before them and what they contributed. They also study the period when dinosaurs walked the earth, ancient and historical time periods, and astronomy. In geography, the children begin by learning about the landforms, the globe, cardinal directions, rocks and minerals, volcanoes, and the earth’s topography. In zoology, the children learn all about animals. They get to compare parts, systems and ecosystems; identifying similarities and unique characteristics. Scientific names of animals, plants and natural phenomenon are introduced as students classify introduced and observed inside and outside the classroom. There are also other topics that are within the four main areas.

1. Astronomy
   a. 8 planets
   b. Relationship between sun and moon
   c. Rotation and revolution
   d. Moons of the planets
   e. Stars and constellations
   f. How the four seasons are created
   g. The phases of the moon
   h. Solar and lunar eclipse

2. Biology
   a. Living and non-living
   b. Mrs. Grec- characteristics of living things
   c. Prokaryote/Eukaryote cells
   d. 3 domains
   e. 6 Kingdoms
   f. Invertebrate/vertebrate
   g. Plant vs. animals
3. Botany
   a. Parts of a: plant, root, stem, leaves, flower, fruit, and seed
   b. Types of a: plant, root, stem, leaves, flower, fruit, and seed
   c. Functions of a: plant, root, stem, leaves, flower, fruit, and seed
   d. Plant stories
   e. How plants satisfy their needs
   f. Advanced plant parts
   g. Plant kingdom chart
   h. Identify seeds by plant parts
   i. Study of fungi- parts and types
   j. Mold study
   k. Work on algae

4. Chemistry
   a. States of matter
   b. Physical and chemical change of matter
   c. Properties of matter
   d. Acids and bases
   e. Molecules

5. Ecology
   a. Introduction to biomes/parts
   b. Types of biomes
   c. Cycles- water, nitrogen, carbon, oxygen
   d. Parts of soil
   e. Layers of soil
   f. Types of soil
   g. How biomes affect plants and animals?
   h. Study of our biome
   i. Rock cycle
   j. Layers of the forest
   k. Producer, consumer, and decomposer
   l. Food web/chain
   m. Chain of decomposers
6. Geography
   a. Land, water, air
   b. Sandpaper globe
   c. Continent globe
   d. Regular globe
   e. 10 basic land and water forms
   f. Parts of a globe
   g. Cardinal direction
   h. Layers of the earth
   i. Rock and mineral
   j. Finding land and water forms on a map
   k. Latitude and longitude
   l. Map reading
   m. Advanced land and water forms
   n. Parts of a mountain and river
   o. Pin maps

7. History
   a. Five great lessons and experiments
   b. History of the days of month and months of year
   c. Wants and needs
   d. Goods and services
   e. Fundamental needs-material and spiritual
   f. BC/AD timeline
   g. Clock of Eras
   h. Black strip
   i. Personal timeline
   j. Dinosaurs
   k. Study timeline of life
   l. Needs and natural resources

8. Human Body
   a. Food pyramid
   b. Healthy habits
c. 5 Senses
  d. Outside parts of the body
  e. Study of the food pyramid
  f. Systems outside/inside the body

9. Physical Science
   a. Name simple/complex machines
   b. Magnets/Magnetism
   c. Simple machines used by early people
   d. Sound energy

10. Zoology
    a. Parts of a vertebrate/invertebrate
    b. Main characteristics of vertebrates
    c. Bird adaptations
    d. Mammal taxonomy
    e. Lifecycles
    f. Animal stories
    g. How animals satisfy their needs
    h. Compare prokaryote and eukaryote cells
    i. Make model of eukaryote cell
Practical Life

Practical life, in the elementary classroom, builds on the skills they've learned during their experience in the primary classroom. As children become more and more independent, they become responsible for choosing and completing their work without teacher reminders. They develop self-reliance and time management skills. The children enjoy learning because it is at their own pace and they have the freedom to choose what to learn and when to learn it. Community is emphasized in the elementary classroom and the children begin to solve their own problems.

As the students get older, they will start taking standardized tests so they can practice test-taking skills. The older elementary children will have opportunities to become the role models of the school by greeting people at school functions, reading to younger students, and becoming involved in outside community projects.

Overarching elementary practical life categories are:

1. Sewing and Weaving
2. Gardening
3. Cooking
4. Woodworking
5. Time Management
6. Grace and Courtesy
7. Self-Care and Grooming
8. Care for the Classroom Environment
9. Maintaining and Managing Personal Belongings
10. Care of Classroom Pets and Plants
11. Recycling, Reducing and Reusing