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The philosophy and methodology of the Sunshine Tree School and Child Care Center are Montessori, but in addition we try to bring the best of current educational methods to our classroom. A brief description of the Montessori philosophy is as follows. The

Montessori system is a philosophy of child growth, and a rationale for guiding such growth. The Montessori materials are designed to take full advantage of the self-motivation and the unique ability of young children to develop their own capabilities. The child needs adults to expose him to the possibilities of his life, but the child himself works with the equipment to create the adult he will become. The child has a deep love and need for purposeful work, however he works not as an adult for profit or completion of a task, but for the sake of the activity itself. The environment is prepared for the child, then the child works with a minimum of adult interference.

The most important years of growth are the first six years of life. A child's learning process does not wait until he enters school at age five or six. It begins at birth, and he learns at a faster rate during his first three or four years than at any other time in his life. What he learns and how he learns has a tremendous effect on his entire life. It is during this period when the child is most sensitive to stimuli from all sources absorbing and learning from his environment. We work with these sensitive periods.

The areas of learning are divided as follows:

1. The exercises of Practical Life are designed to help the child utilize his sense of order in his environment, and within himself. They help the child develop concentration and organization, and teach him to take care of himself and his surroundings. These exercises also provide indirect preparation for writing and reading through the development of eye-hand coordination and muscular coordination and control.

2. Sensorial Area - Dr. Montessori regarded the training of the senses as the forming of a foundation upon which the child will later build clear and more abstract ideas. The sensorial materials reach the head through the hand. Through these materials the child learns to perceive his world.

3. The materials in the math area are designed so the child working with concrete materials gains knowledge of abstract concepts. The materials follow an orderly progression and enable the child to grasp concepts with greater ease, at his own rate.

4. The building blocks of language, the individual letters, are presented as phonetic sounds. The child is exposed to these sounds, and learns to blend sounds together to make words as he or she is ready.

On discipline; we believe discipline is an integral part of any educational experience. Our teachers are committed to helping each student, as well as the class as a whole, develop real discipline.

The Montessori class offers the child an ungraded, individualized learning experience in an environment structured to his unique potential during his formative years.

The Montessori philosophy is based on the belief in the essential dignity of all human beings, on the spiritual quality of all children, and on the value of all human work. Its goal is the maximum possible development of each child into a happy, fulfilled adult at peace with himself and his neighbor.

A CHILD, LIKE THE TINIEST SEED, NEEDS GUIDANCE AND SUNSHINE TO GROW

