

# Curriculum Guide Montessori at Mountain School



## About the Montessori Program

### Curriculum

Montessori at Mountain School is a joyous and respectful early childhood program for children aged two years, nine months through the kindergarten year. The two child-centered classrooms are specially prepared, multi-age settings with a full complement of Montessori materials that teach care of self and environment and early math, language, science, and geography principles with hands-on materials and activities. Teachers inspire young children's natural curiosity in learning about the world around them. Core principles include respecting the child, building independence, teaching compassion, and encouraging a life-long love of learning.

### Academic Learning

Following a traditional Montessori curriculum, students participate in activities based in five areas: language, math, sensorial, practical life, and cultural studies (geography, foreign language, arts, sciences). Lessons are given individually to students aged three and four, while kindergartners receive both individual and small-group lessons. Afternoons are devoted to more advanced lessons in reading, writing, math, and Spanish for the kindergarten class. Assessments include progress monitoring for developmental milestones and early academic skills in the pre-kindergarten year and for core skills in early reading and mathematics in the kindergarten year.

### Arts and Foreign Language Education

Telluride Mountain School places an emphasis on developing not only core academic subjects but complementary studies that allow children to cultivate interests and talents, make connections among subjects, communicate in various ways, and develop a lifelong love of learning. Students in the Montessori enjoy integrated instruction in Spanish, art, movement, and music, while kindergartners additionally enjoy twice-weekly direct instruction in Spanish and studio art.

### Winter Sports Programs

In the winter, Montessori at Mountain School students have the opportunity to participate in one of two ski programs: Comets, administered by Telluride Ski and Golf for preschool aged children, and for kindergartners, the school's Winter

Sports Program that takes advantage of the region's natural and recreational resources. Students typically ski for six sessions from early January into March in small, highly supervised instructional groups.

### Values Education and Student Life

Telluride Mountain School is a small community where children are known and loved. Part of the school's responsibility is overseeing the social, emotional, and ethical development of its children. Every program in the school is guided by the school's core values of Respect, Responsibility, Love of Learning, and Integrity, and individuals' decisions are seen through the lens of those values on a daily basis. Teachers in the Montessori division are all trained in early childhood guidance strategies and provide daily support for children as they acquire the skills necessary for social advancement. A school counselor further oversees social and emotional development and provides guidance and instruction in topics from parenting to friendship skills to teachers, students, and their families to promote students' health and wellbeing.

### School Community

Young students in the Montessori enjoy the special sense of safety and belonging while being part of a small community within the larger school. They enjoy special occasions within the Montessori throughout the year, including a twice-annual "Coffee," when parents come to the classroom to see their children work, a Thanksgiving feast, a celebration of the Chinese New Year, and a year-end Fiesta. Kindergartners begin to join the larger school community in a number of ways, including joining first and second graders as reading buddies, skiing with them in the K-12 Winter Sports Program, sharing presentations of learning with them, and joining the larger school for twice-weekly Morning Meetings.

### For more information please contact:

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### Practical Life Curriculum

Practical life includes pre-academic exercises that prepare the child to work effectively in the Montessori at Mountain School environment by refining movement, teaching sequences, introducing left to right processes and providing a foundation in early learning attitudes and dispositions. Most importantly, practical life exercises provide children a sense of accomplishment as they engage in real, meaningful work with tangible results. The familiar home-like environment of the practical life corner allows children to gain independence and confidence as they carry out thoughtfully prepared activities, similar to those a child would participate in at home.

Preliminary exercises include walking around furniture, rolling out a rug, pushing in a chair, opening and closing a door and carrying a chair or table. These exercises enable the child to maneuver gracefully in the environment and develop gross motor coordination and control. Other exercises focus on care of the self and environment; hand-washing, dressing frames, polishing, vegetable preparation, sweeping, and other practical skills prepare the child for more advanced work and develop positive attitudes and dispositions that are useful to the child as his work grows more academic. Young children frequently repeat these activities and thus develop concentration and learn to enjoy completing tasks.

Another aspect of the practical life curriculum is lessons in grace and courtesy. Through modeling, children learn polite behavior such as how to serve food, how to greet a person, how to excuse oneself and how to make introductions. Further lessons revolve around the language and process of problem solving. Children at Montessori at Mountain School learn to identify feelings and needs, state problems and propose solutions using nonviolent communication, predict results, and implement what they consider the best solution.

Some practical life lessons such as care of the self and care of the environment are given individually, while lessons in grace and courtesy and problem solving are best presented at circle time where the entire group can learn a lesson at the same time. Most children enjoy group lessons at circle time and use the modeled behavior immediately.

### *Practical Life Curriculum Outline*

#### *Preliminary exercises and movement*

- Walking in the classroom
- Managing tables and chairs
- Carrying materials

#### *Silence (cessation of movement)*

- Care of self and environment
- Dressing
- Polishing
- Hand washing
- Dusting
- Food preparation

#### *Grace and Courtesy and Problem Solving*

- Social greetings and conventions
- Introductions
- Problem solving strategies
- Non-violent communication

### Sensorial Curriculum

Montessori believed that young children learn through direct manipulation of learning materials, and the sensorial materials are designed to teach the senses. Largely pre-academic in nature, the sensorial curriculum provides early experiences for children in discrimination of size, dimension, texture, weight, sound, smell, color, taste and temperature. Along with refining a child's senses, the exercises introduce precise vocabulary and concepts of comparison. Once a child has worked with an introductory material, there are opportunities for progressive exercises in sorting and classifying. The curriculum also introduces concepts related to math and geometry, including plane shapes and geometric solids. Physical geography is an additional component of the sensorial curriculum.

Each child progresses at his or her own pace through the sensorial curriculum and learns through individual presentations from the teacher, presentations from older children and by observing more experienced children working with the materials. Many of the introductory materials appeal to the youngest children, and, along with practical life exercises, they spend a large portion of their day exploring the materials and exercises on the sensorial shelves.



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### *Sensorial Curriculum Outline*

#### *Visual*

- Dimension
- Size
- Color
- Shapes

#### *Geometry*

- Regular plane shapes through decagon
- Irregular plane shapes
- Geometric solids
- Constructive triangles
- Binomial and trinomial cubes
- Table of Pythagoras
- Superimposed geometric figures
- Botany
- Leaf forms

#### *Auditory*

- Sound boxes
- Bells

#### *Olfactory*

- Smelling boxes

#### *Gustatory*

- Tasting bottles

#### *Tactile*

- Rough and smooth boards
- Thermic tablets
- Baric tablets

#### *Stereognostic (muscular and tactile mixed)*

- Mystery bag
- Bean bowl

#### *Physical Geography*

- Globes
- Puzzle maps
- Land and water forms

### Language Curriculum

Children from age three through six are particularly receptive to acquiring language, and the Montessori at Mountain School environment is filled with a full range of learning materials and activities designed to support the natural development of language. In particular the materials and activities encourage the refinement of sensory discrimination and the acquisition of precise vocabulary, which together form the basis of personal and academic expression.

The sequence of the language curriculum first emphasizes the development of spoken language and the acquisition of vocabulary through stories and poems, naming objects and classroom materials, social conversations and lessons in both grace and courtesy and problem solving. Simultaneously, the teacher presents work that provides early preparation for reading and writing with activities that develop fine motor control and spatial and sequential perceptions, including left to right activities that instill a sense of direction for written language. In addition, the teacher models correct spoken language and provides a consistent source of new and interesting information through her own speech and through rotating materials and activities in the classroom. Word games, rhymes and word study of initial and final sounds help to develop phonemic awareness.

Direct preparation for reading and writing begins as the child establishes sound-symbol correspondence and a sense of the shape of letters by moving his fingers on the sandpaper letters. Shortly, he will want to construct language with letters, and, before his hand is ready to write, he will manipulate movable letters to synthesize short written words. This is the beginning of writing, which usually precedes the ability to read by some months. As the child gains confidence with forming words, he then begins to analyze the individual sounds and then recombine them and thus starts to read. Children develop control for handwriting through practicing numerous fine motor activities before finally writing with a pencil.

Each child progresses at his or her own pace through the language curriculum and learns through individual presentations from the teacher and by observing more



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experienced children using the language materials. Most children exhibit natural interest in forming words with letters by about age four to four and a half and begin to sound out words by age five to five and a half, though there is some variability. Once the child has learned the beginning mechanics of writing and reading, a range of language activities exists in the classroom from journals, to phonetic readers, to labeling, to short books on many topics and children's research materials, such as atlases and graphic dictionaries. Children also practice reading sight words through games and activities. Most children completing the kindergarten year in the Montessori at Mountain School program will be able to read and write short phonetic words with blends and digraphs, read short phonetic primers with some common sight words and enjoy a range of language activities, including using language for practical purposes-- from filling needs to solving problems; to conversing socially; to listening to and enjoying stories, poems and books that are read aloud.

### *Language Curriculum Outline*

#### *Indirect Preparation for reading and writing:*

- Practical life exercises that provide left to right movement and sequences
- Cylinder blocks and metal insets to prepare hand for handwriting
- Geometry, botany and geography materials to develop sense of shape and direction
- Spoken language skills and vocabulary development
- Word games leading to phonemic awareness

#### *Reading Mechanics:*

- Sound-symbol correspondence
- Phonograms
- Phonetic words
- Sight words
- Reading nomenclature from classroom studies

#### *Language Study:*

- Function of words (parts of speech)
- Word study (prefixes, suffixes, synonyms, singular and plural forms)
- Advanced language study: syntax, interpretive reading, and language extensions

- Writing Mechanics
- Sound - symbol correspondence
- Forming letters without writing
- Alphabet- lower case
- Captions and labels
- Journal keeping, story writing, copying poetry and songs

#### *Comprehension*

- Listen purposefully and enjoy a range of literary forms
- Identify and describe characters and their feelings
- Indicate chronological order of events
- Recount plot or information from texts
- Make reasonable predictions about what will happen next in a story
- Participate in group discussions

### **Math Curriculum**

Montessori at Mountain School's math curriculum is designed to support children's natural interest in math and provide a strong foundation in numeracy through the use of specially designed math materials. Through concrete mathematical experiences, the youngest children learn about dimension, size, number, shape and sequence. Then with the use of increasingly abstract materials, children make the passage from concrete experience to paper and pencil exercises, all the while relying on the foundation of understanding built through their direct experiences. Every math concept is taught with a corresponding material.

At Montessori at Mountain School, young children typically begin their exploration of math concepts through the use of the sensorial materials, which are pre-academic in nature and give a sensory impression of quantity, dimension, shape, size and other physical qualities. Next come more abstract and formal mathematic concepts, such as number-symbol correspondence and place value, which children first explore with the use of number rods, counters, beads, bars, squares and cubes. Once the concepts of quantity and place value are established through the repeated activities with the math materials, the child begins work with numeric operations and will practice all four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) with the use of increasingly abstract materials. When a division problem results in a



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remainder, and the child asks about how to split it up, he is ready for fractions and more advanced mathematics.

Each child progresses at his or her own pace through the math curriculum and learns through individual presentations from the teacher, presentations from older children and by observing more experienced children working with the math materials. Teachers gently encourage children not exhibiting a natural inclination toward math to work with the materials, and kindergartners complete weekly work plans that include daily math practice to ensure adequate exposure. While there are some general expectations as to when most children will work in each part of the curriculum, there is also variability depending on the individual's readiness, interest and ability. Most children finishing the kindergarten year will use all four numeric operations with and without exchanging with numbers up to four digits, while those with a strong propensity for math will also work with advanced math concepts.

### *Math Curriculum Outline*

- Association of quantity and symbol for numbers 1-10
- Linear counting and number combinations to 10
- Geometric shapes, forms and nomenclature
- Fundamentals of the decimal system: understanding numbers to 9,999
- Static and dynamic numeric operations
- Advanced math including fractions; operations with fractions; abacus for static and dynamic operations; larger numbers; missing factors

### **Cultural Curriculum**

Montessori at Mountain School's cultural curriculum includes a mosaic of activities that explore the full range of human cultural studies and activities, from art to zoology, including such traditional subjects as social studies and science. Teachers and assistants organize cultural activities that are available during the work cycle, and children often enjoy these activities in small, social groups, often with a new activity or craft demonstrated by the classroom assistant. Throughout the year, teachers and assistants develop activities and projects related to art, music, movement, food preparation, geography and science.

The school year is divided into seven short terms, with cultural activities, themes and materials rotating with each change. Additionally, each short term the children consider a different continent, and cultural activities extend the lessons of physical and cultural geography that are integral in the primary program. Cultural activities thus may cluster around a geographic theme. For example, during a recent "Africa" term, students had weaving lessons, made papier mache African animals, enjoyed cooking and eating a traditional bobotie, listened to African music, made clay mask pendants and learned to count to ten in Swahili. Local specialists, such as Mark Galbo for Music, Telluride Dance Academy instructors for movement, Sally Davis for drama and other visiting teachers and volunteer parents enliven the program with their special skills and enthusiasm.

As part of Telluride Mountain School's commitment to global education, students in the Montessori program begin the study of Spanish language. Lessons in the classroom include songs and vocabulary games based on Alice Renton's In Other Words program. Kindergartners also benefit from twice weekly group lessons in Spanish. As with all primary programming, lessons include activities and movement, as well as songs and games that help young children acquire speaking and listening skills.

### *Cultural Curriculum Outline*

- Art, including two and three dimensional representations and art appreciation
- Foreign language study, including Spanish instruction
- Cultural and physical geography
- Movement, including dance, creative movement, yoga and skiing
- Science, including hands-on experiments related to earth, life and physical sciences
- Theater, including puppetry, dramatic expression and storybook theater
- Music, including the bells curriculum, performance, notation and music appreciation
- Cooking and other activities



## Montessori at Mountain School Scope and Sequence

### Mathematics/Science

Pre-Kindergarten Mathematics	Kindergarten Mathematics	Pre-Kindergarten Science	Kindergarten Science
One-to-one correspondence; quantity-symbol correspondence; count to 20; perform activities of seriation, pattern and comparison; perform operations with numbers to 20 using manipulatives; sort items with 1 or 2 attributes; recognize simple plane shapes	Write numbers to 20; count to 1000*; recognize numbers to 9,999; add and subtract* two four-digit numbers with exchanging; introduction to multiplication; skip count* by 2, 5, 10; recognize symbols + - x÷; identify coins; identify odd/even; sort items with two attributes; identify* plane and solid shapes; introduction* to fractions; introduction to bar graph and collecting data; measure with standard and non-standard measures  <i>*With manipulatives</i>	Introduction to concepts related to observation, counting, classification and measurement; introduction to solar system; cooking and simple experiments related to physical science: sink/float, magnetic/not magnetic; simple machines; living/not living; land/air/water; nomenclature related to plants and animals: bean sprouting, classroom pets, animal tracks, birds and eggs; introduction to the human body: body parts, skeleton, five senses; lifecycle: butterfly hatching	Introduction to concepts related to observation, counting, classification and measurement; introduction to solar system; cooking and simple experiments related to physical science: sink/float, magnetic/not magnetic; simple machines; living/not living; land/air/water; nomenclature related to plants and animals: bean sprouting, classroom pets, animal tracks, birds and eggs; introduction to the human body: body parts, skeleton, five senses; lifecycle: butterfly hatching



## Montessori at Mountain School Scope and Sequence

### Language Arts/Social Studies

Pre-Kindergarten Language Arts	Kindergarten Language Arts	Pre-Kindergarten Social Studies	Kindergarten Social Studies
Sound-symbol correspondence; recognize initial and final sounds; recognize rhymes; show book sense; recognize some environmental print; scan text left-right; listen to and discuss stories, poems, folktales, non-fiction; develop vocabulary through conversation, listening to books read-aloud and nomenclature lessons; present information at circle time (sharing); use movable alphabet to form short phonetic words; form motor programs with sandpaper letters; perform fine motor activities leading to handwriting; begin to form letters with a writing tool; copy words to label pictures and books	Sound-symbol correspondence: all letters and some common phonograms; read words with cvc pattern, some blends and digraphs, and sight words; listen to and discuss stories, poems, folktales and non-fiction selections; develop vocabulary through conversation, listening to books read aloud and nomenclature lessons; give presentation on favorite book at circle time; write lower case letters; write short phonetic words with familiar patterns; write and draw in journal; make books; write short messages or greetings; introduction to the parts of speech: noun, adjective, article, verb, conjunction	Introduction to concepts related to space and time, including timelines, clocks, calendars, vocabulary of direction; introduction to globes and maps; overview of oceans and continents of the world; introduction to cultures of the world through art, literature and activities; globe making; introduction to land and water forms	Time, space and direction concepts, including analog clock, calendar and timelines of day, year, child's life; puzzle maps of the continents and the states of the US; cultures of the world; land and water forms; flat map making; introduction to climate zones and the relationship between geography and culture





## Montessori at Mountain School Scope and Sequence

### Arts/Foreign Language

Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten Music	Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten Visual Art	Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten Drama	Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten Spanish
<p>Children sing songs, enjoy musical movement activities and games, make music with simple instruments and listen to samples of music from around the world. They also learn to match and grade tones with the Montessori bells. Children with interest may also learn simple musical notation and note value with Montessori music materials designed for young children.</p>	<p>Introduction to media, including easel painting, watercolor, collage, papier mache, clay, pencils and pastels; cultural representations including Aboriginal dreamings, Native American sand painting and other traditional, communal art projects. Students engage in both open-ended explorations and guided, teacher-led projects.</p>	<p>Children participate in a number of dramatic activities, including informal dramatic play and puppetry and guided dramatic activities such as fingerplays, stories, songs and rhymes, and drama activities with local specialists, including Sally Davis for story theatre. Children also learn early presentation skills.</p>	<p>Informal foreign language instruction: counting, colors, body parts, clothing, names of animals, simple greetings. Arts and activities related to Spanish-speaking cultures. Bilingual (English-Spanish) storybooks. Songs and games in Spanish.</p>

## **MISSION**

Telluride Mountain School delivers a program of challenging academics that promotes critical thinking, aesthetic expression and ethical behavior, while encompassing a commitment to community service, global citizenship and engagement with the natural environment. The school culture embraces independence, personal responsibility, compassion, curiosity and joy.

## **CORE VALUES**

### **RESPECT**

We honor self and community, and value that which is different.

### **LOVE OF LEARNING**

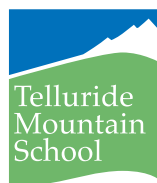
We foster lasting curiosity, creativity and passion in a challenging and safe environment.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

We understand the impact of personal actions, and uphold service as an integral part of scholarship and citizenship.

### **INTEGRITY**

We adhere to values and ethics that enable us to approach our studies and lives with courage, pride, honesty and empathy.



[www.telluridemtnschool.org](http://www.telluridemtnschool.org)

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