

## **“Does a Public Pre-Kindergarten Montessori Program Really Prepare Students For Kindergarten?”**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**This article is written to support the public school pre-kindergarten Montessori program. The author explains concepts that students are expected to learn while enrolled in the pre-kindergarten Montessori program. Even though the students qualify for this program based on income and language, they are still afforded an opportunity to learn and compete in an ever-changing society.**

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I have worked with pre-kindergarten students for the past three years. During my career in education, I believe that pre-kindergarten education makes a difference in preparing our future elementary aged students. The program actually exposes students to social skills that involves meeting children from other cultures; mathematical skills, reading skills, science and social studies curriculum. The program at some schools even exposes children to different languages. Pre-kindergarten students are usually aged three through five years old. I believe that they learn best through a hands-on curriculum.

The Montessori curriculum is the hands-on curriculum used at the school where I am employed. This curriculum requires students to use manipulative materials and students are not required to sit at a desk to work. In some cases, students' work on the floor with the materials placed on a rug. The materials are strategically designed to teach a particular concept, which starts from the most concrete and goes to the most abstract. This type of structure allows the pre-kindergarten student to work at his/her own pace. Students even develop higher order thinking skills because they are allowed to make their own choices. The pre-kindergarten student has matured and has developed more of an independency. At our school, pre-kindergarten students enter in August and usually start their day at eight o'clock in the morning and end at two fifteen in the afternoon. Out of seven hundred thirty-five students, five hundred eighty five of them ride school buses to

and from school. That is another aspect of the type of exposure these three through five-year-old students experience.

The pre-kindergarten student will take an assessment on the following: recognizing letter sounds, recognizing colors, tying shoestrings together, snapping snaps together, buttoning shirts, recognizing and naming shapes, writing and recognizing their first and last name, reciting and dialing their phone numbers, reciting their home address, and knowing their birthday. Other targets include students learning first, next, last in sequential order; using computers, practicing self control, communicating appropriately, learn to care for toys and materials, learn to skip, jump, hop, throw, bounce a ball, cut, paste, draw, catch, run, and kick. Students even learn to perform simple investigations, predict outcomes, scribble to represent letter-like forms, count from one to one-hundred, count by tens, and the pre-kindergarten student learns how to handle and care for books. Students sound out consonant-vowel-consonant words, and read simple sentences. Students sort objects by color, shape, size; from short to long and from big to little. Students demonstrate AB patterns, ABC patterns, AABB patterns. They learn the days of the week, current month and current year. Students even match set to numbers and count the objects in a set, after the correct number has been identified.

In conclusion, the pre-kindergarten student is exposed to several learning opportunities and the idea that pre-kindergarten schools are only daycares, is definitely a myth-at least in this particular case. So the answer to this question, “**Does Pre-kindergarten really prepare students for kindergarten**”, is **YES!**