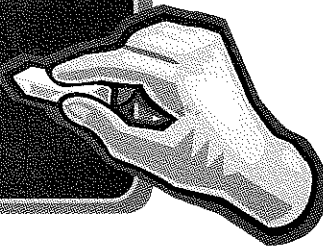


Education



Study finds Montessori-educated kids fare better

A study that compared inner-city public Montessori education with traditional schools indicates that Montessori-educated children fare better, both socially and academically.

There are more than 5,000 Montessori schools in the United States, and of those 300 of them are public schools. Montessori education is recognized to include the following characteristics:

- Multiage classrooms.
- Special educational materials.
- Student-selected work along with long blocks of time for focus on that work.
- Collaborative environments with student mentors.
- The absence of grades and tests.
- Individual and small-group instruction in academic and social skills.

The study focused on a school in Milwaukee that served urban minority students. Students were allowed to enroll in the school through a random lottery process. Students who won the lottery and whose parents enrolled them were part of the study. Students who lost the lottery and enrolled in other groups served as a control. All of the children had parents who had enrolled them in the lottery and wanted their children to be in the Montessori school. This addressed the concern of some that parents who seek to enroll their children in this type of school are different from parents who don't, and this explains why their children do better—rather than the Montessori education itself say the researchers. All of the children also came from homes with incomes ranging from \$20,000 to \$50,000 per year. Montessori schools are most widely implemented at two levels: Primary—3- to 6-year olds and Elementary—6- to 12-year olds.

According to University of Virginia professor of psychology Angeline Lillard the study found:

- Five-year-old Montessori students were significantly better prepared for reading and math than non-Montessori children.
- Montessori students were better at adapting to change than non-Montessori children.
- Montessori students scored higher on tests evaluating social and behavioral skills, and they demonstrated a greater sense of justice and fairness.

- Montessori children were much more likely to participate in positive play on the playground, and much more likely to avoid rough play.
- The essays written by Montessori students were found to be cognitively and academically more creative.
- Not much difference was found academically in spelling, grammar and punctuation skills. Nor was much difference found in math and reading scores among the 12-year-olds.

Simple three-step compliance guidance can head off preschooler behavior problems

A study has found that adults can dramatically increase the compliance of preschool children who don't obey by following a three-step compliance program.

David Wilder, the lead researcher of the study and psychology professor at the Florida Institute of Technology, says that when the regimen is followed consistently, children are much more likely to follow adults' commands.

Even though the procedure may sound simple, Wilder says, it won't work if it is not applied with consistency.

In the study, preschool-age children were given simple commands such as "Give me the snack item" and "Put the toy away" and "Come here." If the child responded on the first request the instructor responded with brief praise. If the child did not comply the instructor made eye contact with the child and said his or her name and briefly and gently touched the child's chin. The instructor then went on to repeat the command and model the behavior he or she desired from the child. If the child complied, he or she was rewarded with brief praise. If the child did not comply, the request was made again while being guided by the instructor to perform the activity.

Instructors were assigned to perform at 100 percent consistency, 50 percent consistency and zero percent consistency for the study.

Wilder's study found that when the instructors were 100 percent consistent, compliance improved dramatically; at 50 percent compliance improved somewhat; and at zero percent, compliance did not improve and sometimes decreased.