

## **Parent Checklist for Recognizing an Authentic Montessori School**

1. Ask the school representative if they are affiliated with any of the well-known Montessori organizations such as:
  - American Montessori Society (AMS)
  - Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)
  - Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE)
  - Pan American Montessori Association (PAMS)
2. Are lead teachers Montessori trained and certified or in the process of training at a Montessori teacher training center accredited by MACTE?
3. Is the school accredited?
4. Ask to see a Montessori classroom. You should see:
  - Open shelves with a full array of Montessori materials available to all students
  - A classroom setting designed to allow children to work independently or in small groups which allows for interaction of the children
  - Open floor space to accommodate floor work and child-size tables for individual work
  - An aesthetically pleasing classroom. It should be neat, orderly, clean, peaceful, and attractive. You should not see clutter, disorganization, or an over-stimulating environment. You should not see traditional toys or play areas.
  - A multi-age mixture (3-6) (6-9) (9-12) years, etc.
  - A happy, positive atmosphere with children working independently and together
  - Children fully engaged with the Montessori materials
  - Children teaching and helping each other
  - A sense of calm, purposeful activity and peacefulness exhibited by the students and adults
  - Children are moving and working carefully and respectfully throughout the environment
  - Teachers working with individual students or very small groups on the floor or at a table
  - Teachers communicating and treating students with respect
  - A peace corner or table where students and teachers can use various techniques to instill positive problem solving and communication
  - Music instruments and an art area that are available to the students in the classroom
5. Does the school have outdoor gardens (butterfly, vegetable, etc.), and/or plants or terrariums in the classroom?
6. Does the school have age appropriate outdoor environments that offer an opportunity for free play and development of gross motor skills?
7. Are there classroom or school pets so that children may take part in the care and responsibilities of animals?
8. Does the school provide experiences with foreign language for the students?
9. Does the school have observation guidelines for adult observers?
10. How does the atmosphere of the school and classroom "feel" to you? Is it a match to your view of how education should be?