



Frequently Asked Questions:

What is Montessori Education?

"Nearly 100 years ago, an Italian physician inspired the birth of a worldwide educational movement. Dr. Maria Montessori, one of Italy's first female physicians, became interested in education while working with children in Rome. In 1907, Montessori continued shaping her learning model by opening Casa dei Bambini, 'A Children's House,' for pre-school children. With her scientific background to guide her, she observed how young people learned best when engaged in purposeful activity rather than simply being fed information. Combining sensory-rich environments and hands-on experiential techniques, she drew upon her clinical understanding of children's cognitive growth and development in constructing an educational framework that would respect individuality and fulfill the needs of the 'whole child.' Dr. Montessori's pioneering work created a blueprint for nurturing all children to become the self-motivated, independent and life-long learners that are the ultimate goal of today's educational reform movement."

Source: www.amshq.org

How is your school different from the traditional public school classroom?

Students in a Montessori classroom work at tables or with mats on the floor, within a structured environment. Teachers work with each student to develop a work plan and students are responsible for meeting the expectations of their work plan on a daily and weekly basis, working through different job areas such as math, reading and language arts. Students are provided main lessons and core curriculum instruction on a daily basis. Then they break up into smaller lesson groups as well as breaking out into individual work time. During this independent work time, students move freely about the classroom as they progress through their work plans in the order that best suits them – having the freedom to decide the order of completion. Students can often spend free time exploring favorite subjects in greater depth. Students develop a greater sense of independence and responsibility when given choices within their academic day. This freedom fosters the student's ability to make decisions that directly affect themselves and to become independent thinkers and workers. It also supports the child in developing self-responsibility by taking ownership of their own learning.

Because students are working at their own academic/developmental level, they are able to work toward concept mastery before moving on – instead of being tied to the general pace of the classroom as a whole (which, in the traditional public classroom, may mean skipping over a concept they didn't quite "get" or "hanging out" while the rest of the class catches up). In other words, if one student is having trouble with long division, he/she can spend more time on it while another student may need to focus their time on additional practice in fractions. Accelerated students can continue working on more challenging subject matter as they are ready for it. This format allows the teacher to guide a student in the area most needed while still presenting the general lessons and curriculum to the students as a whole.

What is a Charter school?

In 1992, the State Legislature passed the Charter Schools Act with the intent of providing opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a method to accomplish the following: improve student learning; increase learning opportunities for all pupils; encourage the use of innovative teaching methods; create new professional opportunities for teachers; provide parents and pupils with expanded choices; and hold the schools established under this Act accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes.

What is the cost for my child to attend CMP?

As a California K-8 public charter school, CMP is a tuition-free public school funded by the state Department of Education. Donations are accepted to support field trips, arts enrichment and technology.

What school district are you in?

CMP is a network of 4 schools, operating on 5 campuses in the Greater Sacramento area. Each of the 4 schools is sponsored by a separate school district, as follows: Elk Grove campus (Elk Grove Unified School District); Capitol Campus (Sacramento City Unified School District); American River Campus/Carmichael Campus (San Juan Unified School District); and Shingle Springs Campus (Buckeye Union School District). As California Public Charter Schools, the CMP schools are considered "schools of choice" and operate independently of their authorizing school districts.

What are your geographical boundaries for enrollment?

As public charter schools, CMP schools are considered "schools of choice" and do not have residential requirements or geographical boundaries.

Do I need to apply to my school district for an inter-district transfer?

As public charter schools, CMP schools are considered "schools of choice" and do not require inter-district transfers.

How do you admit new students/How do I apply to your school?

CMP admits new students on a lottery basis. After the annual re-enrollment process is completed for current families, CMP begins its first round of lotteries for Fall enrollment in early Spring of the preceding year. To begin the enrollment process, please stop by any campus office or visit the CMP website (www.cacmp.org) for an enrollment application. Then submit the completed application to the campus or campuses for which you are most interested. In the meantime, you may contact the campus nearest you for dates and information on upcoming public tours.

What are the odds of my child getting in through the lottery?

Lottery odds vary from year to year by grade and by campus. Available slots for new families are generally not determined until after the re-enrollment process for current families is complete. Since summer is historically the biggest time of year for families to move or make changes, lotteries are often conducted on an on-going basis, as spaces become available. If your child's application is not pulled in the initial Spring lottery, CMP will keep it on file for all subsequent lotteries conducted for the same school year.

If I applied last year and didn't get in, do I have to submit a new application?

Yes, please submit a new application for each school year. This provides CMP with current information, including your continued interest in CMP.

If my child received a lottery space last year and we did not enroll at that time, do we have to apply again?

Yes. We can only confirm a lottery space at the time of availability. If you are not able to accept enrollment when your child's application is pulled, we will offer the space to another family and you must resubmit your child's application for subsequent lotteries.

How old does my child have to be to start at your school?

As a public K-8 school, students must be 5 years old by December 2nd, in the year they begin attending kindergarten, and 6 years old by December 2nd, in the year they begin first grade.

Can you mail me an application/some information on your school?

The enrollment application, Family-School Handbook and other information can be accessed at the CMP website: www.cacmp.org, or you can stop by your nearest CMP campus to pick up an application. Staff at each CMP campus can provide information about upcoming public tours.

Can I schedule an appointment to visit your school?

Staff at each CMP campus can provide you with information regarding the school program as well as the schedule for campus tours. Additional information can be found on the CMP website at www.cacmp.org

How many students do you have in a classroom?

The number of students in a class varies based on the configuration of facilities at each campus. In accordance with California State Class Size Reduction guidelines, K-3 class enrollment is 20 students or less, per teacher. Grades 4 through 8 typically provide for 1 certificated teacher to 24 or less students.

What are the hours of the school day?

The school hours generally run from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm daily, with slight variations from campus to campus. Please check with your local CMP campus to confirm class hours, as well as kindergarten scheduling.

Do you have before and after school care?

Yes. CMP's Club Montessori program is an optional care program available from 7 am to 6 pm. This program provides seamless transition of care for our students and families who require extended care outside the regular school day. More information and tuition rates are available from the school office or from our website at www.cacmp.org.

Are you a year-round school?

No. CMP operates on a slightly modified traditional calendar. In addition to Summer break, CMP schedules a 3-week intersession break during Winter and Spring. These break times allow parents ample opportunity to schedule vacations without interfering with the student's academic schedule.

What do families do with their children during school breaks?

CMP's optional Club Montessori program is available during intersession periods, minimum days, and summer break.

Do you require (allow, encourage) parent participation?

As a requisite component of enrollment, parents are required, and expected, to complete 40 hours of service for one child, 70 hours of service for two or more children during the school year. This service can be fulfilled in numerous ways, including, but not limited to, the following: working in the classroom, participating in field trips, serving on parent committees, and participating in parent workdays. There are many opportunities on campus and off – during the school day, or evenings and weekends.

Do your students wear uniforms?

CMP students participate in a relaxed uniform dress code which is available on our website. Each campus has the discretion to modify its guidelines based on their local campus community.

Do you have bus service to your school?

Students attend CMP schools from a far-reaching geographical area. Accordingly, CMP does not provide bus transportation.

Do you have a hot lunch program?

Lunch programs vary from school to school. While students are encouraged to bring a healthy lunch, many of the CMP campuses offer optional "vendor lunch" days as a part of their fundraising programs. These vendor lunches are optional and available for a fee.

Do you offer Art, Music, Drama, PE, and Foreign Language Classes?

Physical Education is a required course at each campus. Enrichment courses are often combined into the "cultural activities" of the Montessori classroom and vary from campus to campus. Please check with the principal of your local CMP campus for more information on particular offerings.

Do you have a GATE program?

Within the Montessori classroom, all students have the opportunity to experience a wide variety of academic and cultural instruction often only reserved for students enrolled in accelerated programs at other schools. Further, accelerated students in the regular Montessori classroom have the opportunity *on a daily basis* to work at higher levels of mastery and academic achievement, while still remaining in a

class with their social peer group. For these reasons, accelerated students often flourish in the Montessori environment without the need for a separate GATE program.

My child has a disability and I was told that Montessori was the best program for my child.

Montessori education is a successful alternative for many students; and there are some students and families that may find other methodologies that are a better match. The best way to assess the potential for your child's success in the Montessori environment is to schedule a school tour and a time for your child to come into the classroom and interact with the teacher and the other students.

Do you have credentialed teachers?

Every CMP classroom provides a California State-Credentialed teacher. Most of CMP's teachers also hold Montessori teaching certificates or are actively working to obtain them.

Are you accredited?

CMP schools are California public schools recognized by the California Department of Education. Each of the CMP schools has also received a full five-year accreditation through the Montessori School Accreditation Commission (MSAC).

Where do your Montessori teachers receive their training?

A significant number of CMP's teachers have received their Montessori teaching certificates through the National Council on Montessori Education (NCME), in association with their studies at the Montessori Teachers College, Sacramento. Others have received their training through American Montessori Society (AMS) schools, Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) schools, or other recognized training programs.

Does your curriculum meet state standards?

CMP's curriculum is Montessori based and aligned with state standards. As a public school, students participate in state standardized testing each spring and receive a combination of progress reports and grade reports (two times each) for a total of four different opportunities to report student progress to parents each year. These grade reports are also based on state standards and published Montessori curriculum for each grade – and reflect the student's progress in mastering each standard.

Do you administer state tests?

As a public school, we are required to administer the State STAR test each spring.

What are your STAR test results? How did your school do on the state testing?

STAR test results for the collective CMP network are available at the CDE website: www.cde.ca.gov Prior to the 2006-07 school year, CMP had been sponsored through the Wheatland School District, in Yuba County. Accordingly, CMP's test results, through the 2005-06 school year can be located under Yuba County. STAR test results for the 2006-07 school year will be listed by individual school, and located along with the results of all schools within the particular authorizing district.

Students within the CMP network as a whole have traditionally scored well on the STAR test. Additionally, CMP staff and families are anticipating the first available release of individual school scores in late summer of 2007.

Besides the annual STAR testing, CMP regularly utilizes many other indicators of student progress and mastery, such as the Albanesi pre and post assessments, teacher observation, GAT general achievement assessments, etc. CMP strongly encourages all parents to engage in dialogue with the classroom teacher for a comprehensive, individualized assessment of their child's progress.