

Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Certification and Accreditation  
Nonpublic School Approval Branch  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
(410) 767-0407

## **Fact Sheet Regarding Maryland Nonpublic Montessori Schools**

### **1. What does the term "Montessori" program mean?**

The Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.09.09.02B(11) defines "Montessori" as an educational program *based on the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori that is validated by a Department-recognized Montessori validating organization that considers, at a minimum, the elements of teacher qualifications, written curriculum, instructional methods, and materials.*

All nonpublic educational programs in the State of Maryland, including Montessori programs, must hold a Certificate of Approval issued by the Maryland State Board of Education before they begin to operate. The Certificate of Approval issued to a Montessori School states that the school is approved to operate a "nonpublic Montessori educational program."

The only exception would be nonpublic schools operated by bona fide church organizations which have chosen instead to register with the Maryland State Department of Education as church exempt.

### **2. What makes a Montessori school different from other schools?**

Each Montessori school in Maryland must hold, in addition to a Certificate of Approval from the Maryland State Department of Education, a certificate from a Department-recognized Montessori validating organization. This validating certificate recognizes that the Montessori school has met organizations standards as a Montessori educational program in Maryland.

- A philosophical approach consistent with the educational methods and areas of instruction of Dr. Maria Montessori;
- At a minimum a Montessori teacher credential issued by one of the following: American Montessori Society (AMS), Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), National Center for Montessori Education (NCME), or Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) accredited program;
- Montessori curriculum and instructional material requirements used to implement the program for each class and age group taught; and
- Classes made up of children representing mixed age grouping based on the

developmental readiness of the students.

### **3. How can I find a Montessori school for my child?**

To assist you in identifying Montessori schools in Maryland, this Department publishes a list of approved Montessori schools by county. This can be found on the Department's website at [www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org). Click on Nonpublic Schools listed under Related Sites in the right column on the website.

By July 1, 2015 all Montessori schools currently holding a Certificate of Approval issued prior to January 1, 2010 from the Maryland State Department of Education must hold a validating certificate issued by a Department-recognized Montessori validating organization.

### **4. *What is the procedure for becoming a Department-recognized Montessori Validating Organization?***

To become a validating organization a Montessori organization submits documentation to the Department for review. Organizations may submit applications twice a year in January and July. To obtain an application contact the Nonpublic School Approval Branch, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 W. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.

### **5. *How does a school become validated by a Department-recognized Validating Organization?***

To receive a certificate from a validating organization, a school must apply for and undergo a review by a Department-recognized Montessori validating organization.

### **6. *Is there a list of Department-recognized Montessori Validating Organizations?***

Yes, a list can be found on the Department's website: [www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org). Click on Nonpublic Schools listed under Related Sites in the right column on the website and then click on Montessori.

For further information, please call the Maryland State Department of Education, Nonpublic School Approval Branch at (410)767-0407.