



An Introduction for Advocates to the Montessori Essentials

Policymakers need to hear a unified voice from the Montessori community in order to create Montessori friendly policy. They can become confused and frustrated when they hear varying demands about what kinds of policies, regulations, and allowances need to be in place to accommodate Montessori programs. When policymakers are confused they are less likely to generate or approve the policies and regulations that Montessori schools need to protect the integrity of their programs.

The *Montessori Essentials* document is designed to be used as a tool in advocating with policymakers and regulatory agencies. Most policymakers are unfamiliar with the various components of a Montessori classroom and how those components work together to create a successful Montessori environment. By proclaiming that the criteria outlined in this document are “essential,” we are giving advocates a tool that tells policymakers what non-negotiable standards their policies need to make allowances for when looking at Montessori programs. Since they have the approval of the Montessori Public Policy Initiative (MPPI), these standards will bear more weight with policymakers than the voice of a school or advocacy coalition alone.

As you review these criteria, *please keep the intent of the document in mind*. This document is not intended to evaluate or judge programs that currently do not meet all of these criteria and/or who cannot meet them due to constraints of current regulations. The sole intention of this document is to provide policymakers with evidence of why advocates are asking for certain policies or regulatory accommodations.

In addition, this document is not intended to imply that these standards are indicative, on their own, of the quality of a Montessori program. Montessori associations will continue to have their own school accreditation and recognition standards for schools that choose to pursue them. Additionally, the Essential Elements rubric, developed by the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, details several other criteria and provides one quality measure for public Montessori schools.

In creating this document, the MPPI Council drew from the Essential Elements of Successful Montessori Schools in the Public School Sector which was previously drafted and endorsed by several Montessori organizations, including American Montessori Society, Association Montessori International, North American Montessori Teachers’ Association, Montessori Educational Programs International, and the Southwestern Montessori Training Center.