



Colorado Montessori Association  
Giving Montessori a Voice in Colorado

## Validation Project Overview

There is no trademark on the use of “Montessori” in the public domain. Any school or program can call itself Montessori but be lacking in any of the elements that would be considered necessary to implement the philosophy and curriculum as taught in accredited or nationally recognized Montessori teacher preparation programs.

The **CMA Validation Project** is one answer to the question “What is Montessori?” By determining baseline, threshold components for participating Montessori schools, CMA has established a Validating Organization to assure state agencies, policy makers, funders, and most importantly, families that the Montessori schools in CO have a measure of quality they can trust.

### **CMA Validation Components of a Validated School**

1. A philosophical approach that is consistent with the evidenced-based educational methods as taught by the scientific observations, research, writings, and instruction of Dr. Maria Montessori (and consistent with national Montessori organizations- AMI, AMS, IMC, MEPI).
2. At least one lead teacher, in each classroom, with a Montessori credential from a MACTE accredited teacher preparation program, or AMI teacher preparation program, at the level being taught.
3. A developmentally appropriate mixed-age group of students based on the Montessori Planes of Development (consistent with teacher education preparation programs/practicums, and national organizations).
4. A Montessori curriculum, areas of instruction, and instructional material requirements, to implement the program for each class and age grouping taught.
5. A daily schedule that provides an uninterrupted work period of 2-3 hours (with 3 being the ideal). Enrichment programs and transition times are scheduled to accommodate these work periods.
6. An established student/teacher ratio and group size consistent with the Montessori system of education (and as recommended by AMI, AMS, IMC, and MEPI) for each class and age grouping taught.
7. A program leader, with a Montessori credential, who contributes to decision making on an administrative level on policies and procedures as they relate to Montessori philosophy, pedagogy, curriculum, and implementation of a high- fidelity Montessori program. (For

example: educational coordinator, level coordinator, Montessori curriculum coach, and/or mentor/master Montessori educator.)

8. Meet all federal, state, and local regulatory and statutory requirements for the health and safety of the students.

### **Benefits of the CMA Validation Project~**

#### **Montessori Schools~**

- Assures that a validated school is providing a Montessori program with key components.
- Assures enrolling families that this Montessori program implements the key components.
- The CO Department of Education, and Colorado Department of Human Services have a measure of quality that indicates the health, and safety of children in the programs they approve.
- As state policy and rules and regulations change, the criteria for a Montessori school remain stable and protected. With increased trust, requirements can potentially be safely modified to provide for more fully implemented programming.

#### **Families~**

- Provides assurance that when a school says it is Montessori it implements key components.
- Provides confidence and assurance that their school of choice meets a measure of quality they can trust.

#### **CO DOE and Colorado Department of Human Services~**

- Gives a standard “definition” of what it means to be a Montessori program.
- Builds trust in the system of Montessori education.
- Provides a measure of quality that can lead to full implementation of Montessori education in regulations.
- Provides consumer protection that Montessori schools have met key components.

#### **Process for participating schools~**

- Complete an on-line application and make payment.
- Complete the School Questionnaire with needed documentation.
- Have an on-site Verifier Team visit.

**For more information contact the Project Coordinator at: [coloradomontessoriassociation@gmail.com](mailto:coloradomontessoriassociation@gmail.com)**