



Colorado Montessori Association
Giving Montessori a Voice in Colorado

The Colorado Montessori Association Validation Project

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is a Montessori Validation Project?**

A Montessori Validation Project is a model for setting baseline standards for a Montessori state community to establish an accountability system. This validation assures the consumer, state agencies, and Montessori schools that a minimal level of quality has been met.

2. **What is the purpose and intention of the Validation Project?**

The goal of the CMA Validation Project is to provide a baseline measure for all participating Montessori programs in the state that will provide an agreed upon “definition” enabling consumers and state agencies to better understand, and trust, that those validated Montessori schools meet a certain level of safety and quality.

3. **What are the baseline standards?**

The standards are those key components that, at a minimum, the Colorado Montessori community believes a school should have in place to be recognized as a Montessori program. These are baseline components which do not define “best practice” but rather provide a measure of quality assurance to state agencies and families.

4. **Who sets the standards for all Montessori schools and programs?**

These criteria have been determined by the CMA Montessori Validation committee. The data from a survey shared with the Colorado community of Montessori schools indicates high agreement with each criterion. These are key components which are foundational to the implementation of the Montessori philosophy, pedagogy, and curriculum.

5. **What are the benefits of the state Montessori Validation Project?**

The CMA Validation Project will give uniform meaning to the use of the name Montessori. Giving a level of self-regulated accountability to state agencies and consumers can be a powerful advocacy tool in efforts to modify licensing rules and regulations, QRIS, recognition of the Montessori teacher credential, and curriculum, and assessment variances.

For State Agencies: The CMA Validation Project will provide state agencies with a measure of assurance that a school calling itself Montessori has met a minimum set of standards established by their peers. This can create a greater trust and willingness to negotiate variances for validated Montessori programs.

For Consumers: Families who have chosen a Montessori program for their children should be confident that they are, in fact, receiving a Montessori education with key components in place.

6. What programs can participate in a state Montessori Validation Project?

Every Montessori school in Colorado is invited to participate on a voluntary basis. CMA will begin this project with validations for Early Childhood programs. Infant/Toddler, Elementary and Secondary programs will follow. This project is for both public and private Montessori schools. CMA is not able to validate in-home Montessori programs at this time.

7. What if a school program does not meet or comply with the baseline components?

A school that does not yet meet the baseline standards would not become a validated school. However, these schools can engage in a quality improvement plan mentored by a CMA Validation volunteer team member to become validated when they have achieved the criteria.

8. How does a state Montessori Validation Project differ from national Montessori organization accreditation or recognition?

The CMA Validation Project is a state based program of accountability that is specific to the needs of the Colorado Montessori community. Its intention is to provide threshold standards or key components for the Montessori schools in the state to provide consumer protection and increased state agency understanding.

The CMA Validation Project in no way replaces or competes with accreditation or recognition by national Montessori organizations. Accreditation is a process of “best practice” as determined by each organization and certifies that a Montessori school meets exemplary standards that place a school at the highest level of achievement and quality.

A Montessori school accredited or recognized by a national Montessori organization (AMI, AMS, IMC, MEPI) can automatically become a validated program through the CMA Validation Project.

9. How does the CMA Montessori Validation Project work?

CMA has formed a Validation Committee and determined criteria for validation based on input from the CO Montessori Community. A Project Coordinator will organize all

aspects of the project. Montessori educators from across the state are volunteering their time and experience to engage in the work of this project.

10. What about liability issues? Will the Colorado Montessori Association become “responsible” for Montessori schools and programs in our state?

The CMA Validation Project is a program for self-accountability of Montessori schools. The project cannot replace state statute, regulations or licensing requirements required of Montessori schools. Therefore, the state agency retains liability.

11. How does our state Montessori community advocate for modifications or changes in state regulations?

With the CMA Validation Project comes a level of trust and accountability that the state agencies can rely on for negotiating modifications in the regulations.

12. What are the costs of a Validation Project? How can a state Montessori community manage a Validation Organization and how is it sustainable?

The CMA Validation Project has determined a fee for validation that provides sustainability for the project and reimbursement for volunteers to cover travel expenses to a school to be validated.