



Montessori believed one of the main reasons for the spread of her schools was that children:

“...found themselves in a place where active experience upon their surroundings were permitted, and where free exercise of their powers could nourish their minds. Surrounded by interesting things to do, they could repeat the exercises at will, and went from one spell of concentration to another. Once the children had reached this stage, and could work and focus their minds on something of real interest to them... the passive became active...”



AMI/USA

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The Association Montessori Internationale was founded in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori to maintain the integrity of her life's work, and to ensure that it would be perpetuated after her death. AMI/USA is responsible for carrying out AMI's mission in the United States of America.

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AMI Montessori School Standards



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Recognition Program

Montessori schools in the United States may participate in a program that affords them the opportunity to identify themselves as an *AMI-Montessori School*. This program offers credibility to a school's status within the educational community as a whole and confirms a staunch support of Montessori principles faithfully put into practice.

The school recognition program also provides assurance to prospective parents that the school upholds the AMI standards, which were derived from Dr. Maria Montessori's original pedagogical methods based on her years of work with children. These standards are the hallmark of an AMI school and have been revised periodically over time.

Schools apply annually and are issued a certificate which indicates that they meet the criteria. Although no two schools are the same, adhering to the distinct philosophical and operational characteristics detailed on this chart guarantees that a school meets the AMI criteria.

Pedagogical Standards

The AMI pedagogical standards for schools ensure that each school is offering programs for their children that allow for their full intellectual, social, and psychological growth and that the approach is consistent with what is presented in AMI training courses worldwide. The only exception to these standards is when they are superseded by state law.

Because the preparation of the adult is the most important aspect of a Montessori environment, the training of the teachers in AMI schools constitutes the most significant standard of school recognition. Therefore, a school applying to become an *AMI-Montessori School* will be granted a recognition status based upon the training of their teachers. There are three different status levels offered, determined by the percentage of AMI trained teachers.

In some instances, schools are in the process of developing programs that meet these standards. These schools are granted the Associated status, which, aside from the AMI credential requirement, is also a transitional category for schools working toward implementation of all AMI standards for recognition.

School Consultations

The AMI School Consultation Program is closely linked to school recognition. The school observation by a trained AMI consultant is of a pedagogical nature and occurs every three years, or as needed. School consultations safeguard and enhance compliance with AMI standards.

AMI Standards	Assistants to Infancy ¹	Primary (3 to 6 years)	Elementary (6 to 12 years)
AMI trained teacher*	1	1	1
Non-teaching assistant(s)	1 per 5 children	1	1
Consultation visit at least once every three years	Yes	Yes	Yes
Complete set of Montessori materials from an AMI approved manufacturer	Yes	Yes	Yes
Children of a mixed age group, including a well-balanced division of ages (ages listed are approximate)	2 months to 3 years (see below)	3 to 6 years	6 to 9 & 9 to 12 years or 6 to 12 years
Classes with an appropriate number of children to ensure social development	10-12 children	24-35 children**	24-35 children**
Minimum uninterrupted morning work cycles	2 hours per day, 4-5 days per week	3 hours per day, 5 days per week	3 hours per day, 5 days per week
Minimum uninterrupted afternoon work cycles	Not required	2-3 hours per day, 5 days a week***	2-3 hours per day, 4 days per week (see below)

* Schools that are temporarily unable to meet this requirement may apply for Affiliated or Associated status.
 ** Optimum class size is the latter half of the range.
 *** Includes all older children as well as 3- and 4-year-olds not napping who remain in the afternoon.

Levels of Recognition

AMI Recognized School

There is an AMI trained teacher at the appropriate age level in every classroom.

AMI/USA Affiliated School

At least 80% of the classes are taught by an AMI trained teacher at the appropriate age level.

AMI/USA Associated/Public Schools

At least 50% of the classes are taught by an AMI trained teacher and at least one must be teaching at the appropriate age level.

With the exception of public schools, affiliated and associated schools must aspire toward recognized status and are given a grace period of up to three years in which to meet the requirements.

¹Assistants to Infancy

Classes for very young children are offered in the following age groupings:

- **Nido (infant environment):** 2 months to 12/15 months
- **Toddler Community:** 12/15 months (walking) to 3 years

Elementary Work Periods

At the elementary level, three hour uninterrupted work periods every morning and two-three hour uninterrupted work periods every afternoon are required, with an exception of one afternoon per week which may be left free to accommodate additional subjects. Other special subjects can be scheduled in such a way that there is still an uninterrupted work period (e.g., during the lunch period or after school).