



1421 Prince St, Ste 350 · Alexandria, VA 22314
703-746-9919 · montessori@amiusa.org · amiusa.org

AMI/USA POSITION STATEMENT ON INCLUSION AND EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Developing a Culture of Belonging for All Children

LEGACY

AMI/USA recognizes that the Montessori pedagogy was intended from its onset to be an aid to life, a restorative pedagogy, a means to social and moral development, and a tool for the liberation and empowerment of marginalized, impoverished, disabled, and neglected children. Montessori first developed and implemented a therapeutic, trauma-informed educational approach to aid the development of children who were institutionalized or excluded and proclaimed “uneducable”. She embodied and envisioned a holistic approach to pedagogy that simultaneously encompassed developmental, psycho-social and educational perspectives in fulfilling the needs of each individual child. As the Montessori method of education has expanded across the United States in both private and public sectors, it has become increasingly evident that there is a need to return to the roots of Dr. Montessori’s work with children who have more diverse developmental needs.

EVOLVING NEEDS

Today, we recognize an ever growing number of students with neurodivergence, developmental and learning differences, and other disabilities in our Montessori spaces. In recent years, the AMI/USA community has identified a critical need for professional development that provides us with the additional training and resources needed to support these students. High quality, inclusive, public and independent Montessori schools must plan for, and build, the capacity to serve children and accommodate adults with a wider range of developmental and learning needs.

We are firm in our commitment to developing and implementing an equity lens in serving children with developmental and learning differences in our Montessori communities. This applies to all areas of our work: enrollment, observation and assessment, preparation of environments, accommodations, delivery of instruction and support, and the awareness of cultural attributes. Cultural competency is crucial to establishing an environment of equity in which we provide accurate and early identification and support that acknowledges the intersectional identities of each student. Furthermore, we have an ethical and legal responsibility to students and adults who have been marginalized/underserved and denied access to Montessori education.



CALL TO ACTION and ADVOCACY

We acknowledge that the inclusion of children who present in the classroom with atypical learning needs is a manifestation of the values of justice, equity, and diversity. Without the foundation of JEDI&B (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging) values, education for peace is not possible. AMI/USA's charge is to foster a sense of belonging and dignity for all children in high quality, inclusive and accessible Montessori environments. To do this AMI/USA supports:

- Transforming minds through ongoing professional development addressing:
 - Preparation of adults (Montessori guides, administrative team, support staff, families/caregivers, specialists/interventionists),
 - Preparation of indoor and outdoor environments/spaces
 - Preparation of materials/supports to meet each student's individual needs
- Ongoing research focused on practices and systems that promote equity and inclusion in Montessori education
- Resources relevant to the advancement of inclusion and equity in Montessori education
- Ongoing opportunities for open community conversations that frame Dr. Montessori's legacy in equity and inclusion.

AMI/USA Operations Leadership/Collaborators



Ayize Sabater, Ed. D
AMI/USA Executive Director



Catherine Massie,
HRSJ Advisory Council, Chair,
AMI/USA Position Statement on Inclusion and
Educational Equity Ad-Hoc Committee




Sheri Bishop, M.Ed.,
AMI/USA Human Rights and
Social Justice Advisor

HRSJ Advisory Council Ad-Hoc Committee Members

Dr. Andree Rolfe
Erin Lopez-Brooks
Anita Lee
Paula Flanders
Christine Mein
Francoise Leger



Jacqui Miller,
Chair, AMI/USA HRSJ Board Committee



Board Leadership
Dr. KaLinda Bass-Barlow, Chair,
AMI/USA Board of Directors

Definitions and References