



Montessori

JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE

TE ARA KI HUHUA TANGA

April 2012

FIRST DRAFT

Montessori Aotearoa
New Zealand

Montessori
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND





MANZ Vision:

Making Montessori Matter in Aotearoa New Zealand

We envision Montessori education becoming a well-known, highly respected and informed choice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

MANZ Mission:

Montessori Makes the Difference

Our mission is to support and **influence** our community to deliver excellent Montessori programmes that enable the holistic development of infants, children and adolescents.

MANZ Guiding Principles:

CREATING an environment to foster a love of learning by enhancing freedom with responsibility, valuing creativity, and appreciating individuality.

NURTURING the human spirit by respecting self, others, and the environment through connection, communication and collaboration.

EDUCATING for peace by embracing diversity, celebrating the joy of discovery and practising honesty and humility



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Overview

The development of the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* has been a journey taken by the Montessori community in New Zealand over many years.

Many Montessori organisations internationally have focused on developing quality assurance programmes. MANZ has benefited from learning about the Montessori Quality Assurance Programme developed in recent years by the Montessori Australia Foundation.

While the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* may also provide guidance for Montessori educators or organisations around the

world; it is important to acknowledge that the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* has been guided and influenced by innovations in the New Zealand early childhood and primary education sector.

Our Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* is being developed to meet the needs of Montessori early childhood centres and schools operating as an integral part of the New Zealand education system.

Our logo has been designed to reflect how the journey can start at any point of the spiral and is without an end. The name chosen reflects the goal of seeking excellence for our children and translates as 'Te ara ki huhuatanga' or 'The path to abundance/excellence'.

Our whakatauki provides a way to reflect on the opportunities offered by the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga*.

E kore te tangata e pakari i runga i te wai marino
A person who remains in calm waters will never get strong



Introduction

The Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* supports teachers, management, families and whanau in Montessori centres and schools to engage in a journey of continuous improvement through reflection and review using Montessori indicators for quality practice, with mentor support.

The Montessori Journey to Excellence is voluntary and will be separate from MANZ membership.

The Montessori Journey to Excellence Working and Consultative Groups have done the work to date and some of the detailed ideas, discussions and considerations made over the last 18 months are included in this draft document.

The first section explores the relationship of the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* to other regulatory, curriculum and professional requirements integral to the New Zealand education sector. For example, the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* will complement planned and spontaneous self-reviews in Montessori early childhood centres and strategic, regular and emergent self-review in

Montessori primary classes and schools.

In the second section innovations and changes in requirements within the New Zealand education sector and the development of the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* are outlined.

In the third section the aims of the Montessori Journey to Excellence and a timeline of development are detailed.

In the fourth section the draft Montessori Essential Elements and Indicators for Quality Practice are given in detail.

In the last section, the development of the mentoring aspect of the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* is discussed.

Involvement by MANZ member centres and schools in pilot programmes to evaluate the Montessori Essential Elements and Indicators for Quality

Practice and to develop and trial mentor support will be the focus of the next stage of development of the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* in 2012-13 .

The goal is for Montessori centres and schools to begin engaging with the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* from 2014.

The Montessori Journey to Excellence Working Group invites your participation in the ongoing co-construction of the Montessori Journey to Excellence to ensure it supports the work of Montessori educators in New Zealand in the years to come.

**Ana Pickering on behalf of the
Montessori Journey to Excellence
Working Group
March 2012**





Section One

Connecting the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga*

Montessori centres and schools in New Zealand operate within an education system which aims “to deliver a world-leading education system that equips all New Zealanders with the knowledge, skills and values to be successful citizens in the 21st-century” (Ministry of Education, 2012).

It is an educational environment with a focus on professionalism and accountability for quality learning outcomes for all children.

Investment in our education system is a priority for Government. The Early Childhood Taskforce Report (2011) noted that: ‘Over recent decades, successive New Zealand governments have devoted considerable resources to supporting early childhood education. Significant investments have been made in developing the national curriculum, Te Whāriki, effective initial teacher

education programmes, and regulatory and monitoring activities designed to promote safe environments and good learning outcomes for children.”

The Montessori Journey to Excellence is being developed to fit within and support the requirements for quality learning, accountability and professionalism in Montessori early childhood centres and schools.

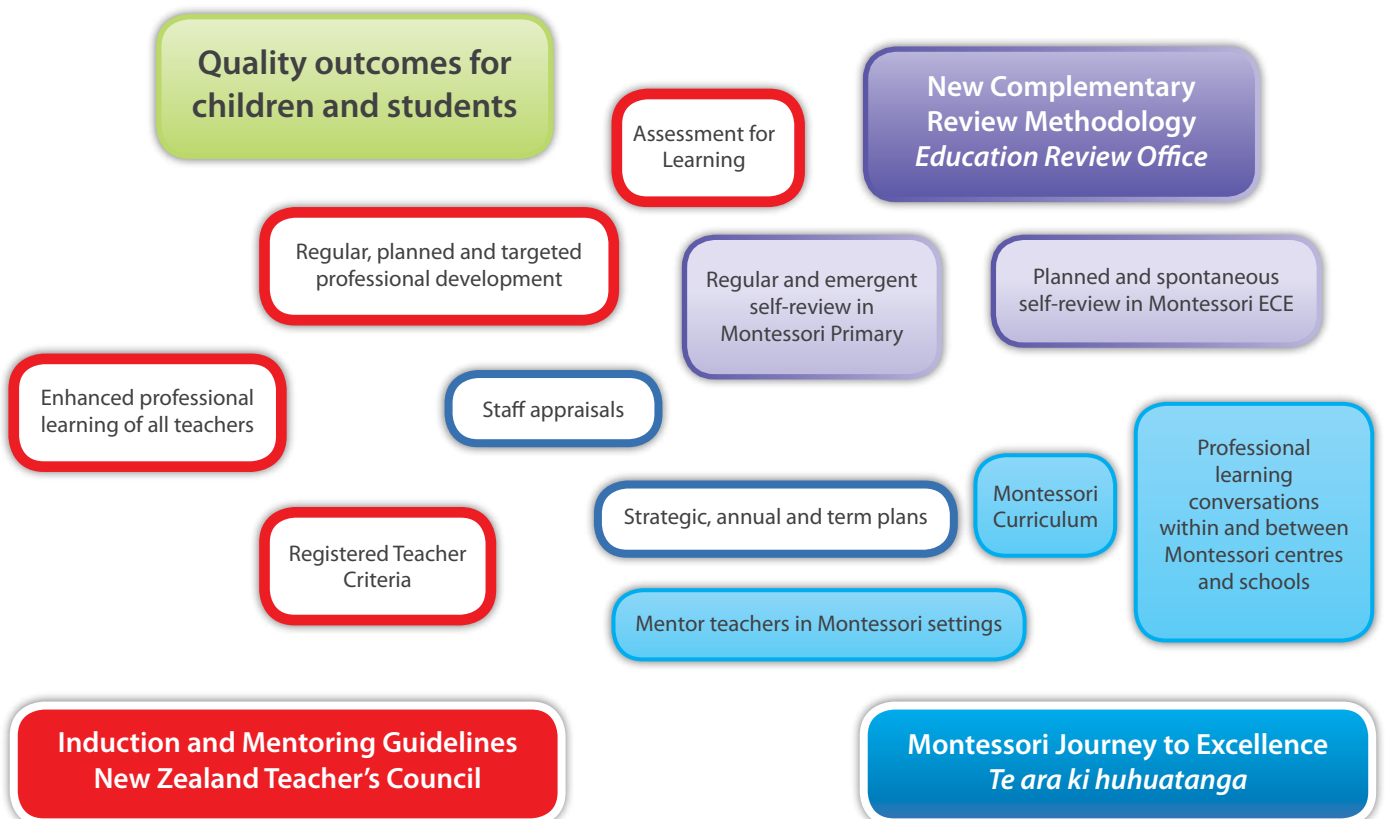
We know that Montessori teachers have many expectations to meet from the Ministry of Education, Education Review Office and New Zealand Teachers’ Council

in addition to their parent community and the children. Our aim for the Montessori Journey to Excellence is to support Montessori teachers in meeting these expectations, not to add an unrelated or additional workload.

The following diagram is the first attempt to demonstrate the relationships between the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* and other aspects of the New Zealand education system. This model will be added to and adapted as we work together to understand the connections.

Diagram One

Finding the Connections with the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga*



Section Two

Development of Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga*

The development of the Montessori Journey to Excellence is the culmination of many years' work and has occurred within the context of innovations and changes within the New Zealand education system.

1996 Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum

The first national curriculum statement for the early childhood sector in New Zealand.

1997-99 MANZ Accreditation of Montessori Early Childhood Centres

An accreditation system for Montessori early childhood centres was developed by MANZ and an Accreditation Council appointed in 1999. MANZ met with MoE Quality Indicators Project Team Leader, Anne Meade, to investigate links to the quality system being developed by the Ministry of Education.

1998 Quality in Action *Te Mahi Whai Hua: Implementing the Revised Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices in Early Childhood Services* published by the Ministry of Education.

1999 The Quality Journey *He Haerenga Whai Hua* published by Ministry of Education

2000 MANZ Accreditation renamed Montessori Quality Continuum and was a process of self-review that aimed to help Montessori centres answer the question from parents "How can I tell if it's a real Montessori?" (MANZ AGM Minutes 2000). Eventually, the introduction of the Quality Journey in the early childhood sector, the cost of the accreditation, the shortage of experienced Montessori educators to act as 'accreditors' and the move toward self-review resulted in the MANZ Accreditation being abandoned.

2002 AUT-MANZ Self-Review Project

AUT and MANZ put in a joint bid for professional development funds to the MoE to jointly offer self-review workshops for Montessori centres, but this was unsuccessful.

2003 MANZ Self-Review Workshop

Workshop held at MANZ inservice led by Sandra Collins, Self Review Project Team, Ministry of Education.

2004 Evaluation Indicators for Education Reviews in Early Childhood Services, Education Review Office

2004 MANZ-AUT Self-Review Workshop

Two-day workshop to support Montessori centres establish a self-review cycle based on the Desirable Objectives and Practices (DOPs) was attended by six Montessori early childhood centres.

2004 Self-Review Projects

Montessori childhood centres presented self-review projects at MANZ Conference at Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington.

2006 Self-Review Guidelines for Early Childhood Education *Nga Arohaehae Whai Hua* published by Ministry of Education.

2005 Implementation of Provision for Gifted and Talented Students in Primary Schools

Primary schools required by Ministry of Education to include gifted and talented students in National Administration Guideline (NAG) 1.



Section Two continued

2007 MANZ Strategic Plan 2007-10

A new strategic MANZ Strategic Plan had wide community consultation during 2006. A new strategic goal was to develop and guidelines for parents choosing Montessori early childhood, primary and secondary education.

2008 MANZ Parent Guides

MANZ Parent Guides identified essential elements of Montessori and provided parents with information about what to look for in Montessori learning communities and questions to ask when visiting a Montessori early childhood centre or school. The Parent Guides are available at www.montessori.org.nz/choosing-montessori.

2008 Regulatory Framework for Early Childhood Sector

A new regulatory framework with new regulations and criteria for early childhood sector came into effect in 2008.

2009 Kei Tua o te Pae Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars

Exemplars, or examples of assessment that make learning visible, are published by Ministry of Education

2009 Implementing Self-Review in Early Childhood Services by Education Review Office

A review of the implementation of self-review in early childhood centres.

2009 Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and Pilot Programme New Zealand Teachers Council

Draft guidelines developed to replace the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions for early childhood, primary and high school teachers and pilot programmes were begun across education sector.

2009-14 Re-licensing of Early Childhood Centres

All new and existing centres licensed or re-licensed by Ministry of Education under the 2008 ECE Regulations, which includes focus on self-review.

2009 Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) Guidelines for Primary Schools

The guidelines were revised to incorporate national and international developments and best practice for education outside the classroom.

2010 New Zealand Teachers' Council Registered Teacher Criteria

NZTC launched the Registered Teachers Criteria which describe what provisionally registered teachers need to work towards in order to gain full registration, and what fully registered teachers need to demonstrate in order to maintain a practising certificate.

2010 Revised New Zealand Curriculum

Primary and secondary schools were required by the Ministry of Education to implement a revised curriculum.

2010 National Standards for Primary Schools

National Standards set expectations that students need to meet in reading, writing, and mathematics in the first eight years at school.

2010 MANZ Strategic Plan 2011-14

A new four-year strategic plan was launched at MANZ 2010 Conference. Strategic Aim 2 focused on 'empowering MANZ member schools and centres to deliver excellent Montessori programmes'. The aim was to use the MANZ Parent Guides as a basis for the development of the Montessori Journey to Excellence.

Expressions of interest to be involved in the Montessori Journey to Excellence were called for at the MANZ 2010 Conference and during 2010. The first meeting of Montessori Journey to Excellence Working Group was held November 2010 and the goals set were set for the Journey to Excellence.

Section Two continued

2011 Montessori Journey to Excellence

MANZ Council budgeted \$12,000 for the Montessori Journey to Excellence. Meetings of the working group were held in February, July and October 2011.

The initial draft of the MJ2Ex essential elements/quality indicators and project plan was sent to a consultative group in April 2011 and an amended draft re-sent in August, 2011. Work began on the development of a mentoring programme for the Montessori Journey to Excellence with meetings with NZ Coaching and Mentoring and Massey University. MANZ presented an overview of the draft Montessori Journey to Excellence to Education Review Office.

2011 Early Childhood Taskforce Report: *An Agenda for Amazing Children*

Report presented to the Minister of Education and submissions sought from early childhood sector.

2011 Revision of ERO's Early Childhood Review Methodology by Education Review Office

A review of methodology was begun with a focus on complementary review with wide consultation with early childhood sector.

2011 Revision of the Framework and Evaluation Indicators for Early Childhood Reviews by Education Review Office

The aim is to encourage and support the development of self-review and to use services' self-review information more in external reviews by ERO.

2011 New Zealand Teacher Council Induction and Mentoring Guidelines

New guidelines launched and workshops held around the country.

2011 Framework and Evaluation Indicators for School Reviews by Education Review Office

A new edition of evaluation indicators for primary schools.

2012 Early Childhood Taskforce Advisory Groups

Advisory groups appointed by Minister of Education to focus on 'quality in early childhood' with report to the Ministry of Education by Easter 2012.

2012 Early Childhood Review Methodology Implementation

Planned implementation of new Education Review Methodology with emphasis on complementary review using internal evaluation by centres and external evaluation by ERO.

2012 Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga*

MANZ launches Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* and seeks involvement of Montessori professional community in ongoing development of pilot programme; trialling of the indicators of quality practice and the development of mentoring support.



Section Three

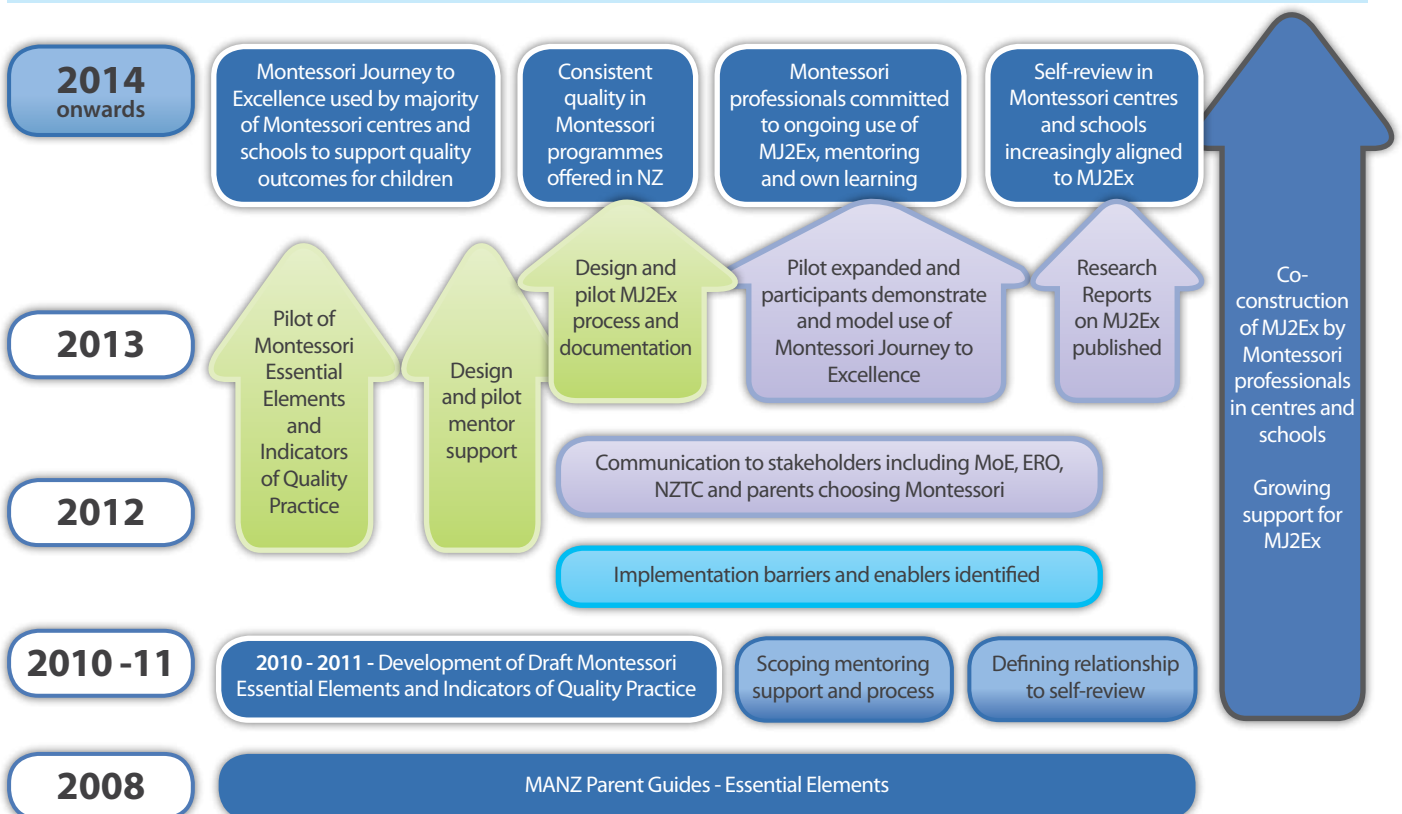
Goals of the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga*

The brief set by MANZ Council in November 2010 for the Montessori Journey to Excellence Working Group was: "To assist Montessori centres and schools in New Zealand to set goals and gain support for the continuing journey to excellence."

The working group identified that The Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* may make a difference by:

- articulating the essential elements and indicators of quality practice for Montessori as developed by the Montessori community in New Zealand;
 - providing a framework for critical reflection of Montessori teaching practice;
 - sharpening the focus of required self-review processes within Montessori centres and schools;
 - providing a starting point for professional learning conversations about Montessori;
 - providing a consistent reference and accurate guidance for Montessori education in New Zealand;
 - enabling Montessori early childhood centres to demonstrate quality practices to Ministry of Education - perhaps for funding purposes in the future;
 - providing national recognition of quality Montessori programmes;
 - providing guidance for parents seeking quality Montessori programmes for their children; and
 - improving quality learning outcomes for children and students in Montessori centres and schools in New Zealand.
- (Montessori Journey to Excellence Working Group February, 2011.)
- The pilot programme will be developed in 2012 and will involve piloting the quality indicators for practice, the self-review process aligned to the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga*, the development of mentor support and trialling the role of mentors within the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga*.
- The number of centres and schools involved in the pilot programme will depend on interest from centres and schools that belong to MANZ.
- Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand has budgeted for this project and intends to provide some financial support for MANZ member centres and schools involved in the pilot programmes. The budget also includes funds for research.

Our goal is to launch the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* in 2014.



Section Four

Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te Ara ki huhuatanga* Essential Elements and Indicators of Quality Practice

Early childhood centres can formulate quality indicators for self-review from a variety of sources including Te Whāriki, ERO Evaluation Indicators (2009), Quality in Action *Te Mahi Whai Hua* (1998), The Quality Journey *He Haeranga Whai Hua* (1999) as well as indicators from individual or collective professional bodies. Centres can also develop their own indicators for review.

Primary schools use evaluation indicators for self-review and the sample indicators are given that show what the Education Review Office would expect to see in a high-performing school; in addition “it is hoped that during the course of a review that more contextually relevant indicators might be added to this list” (Education Review Office, 2011, p11).

The Montessori Journey to Excellence provides Montessori early childhood centres and schools with a set of quality indicators for self-review of their Montessori practice. In this way the Montessori Journey to Excellence will complement planned and spontaneous self-reviews in Montessori early childhood centres and strategic, regular and emergent self-review in Montessori primary classes and schools. As the Education Review Office moves toward complementary review for early childhood and schools, the importance of excellent self-review processes will become even more important.

The Montessori Journey to Excellence identifies three main areas:

1. Montessori Learning Environment
2. Montessori Adults
3. Montessori Learning Community

For each of the three areas essential elements are identified and indicators of quality practice and contra-indicators are defined for each essential element answering the question “what would this aspect of practice look like if it was effective?”

Some elements and indicators are not unique to Montessori but are still included since we believe these are an integral part of a quality Montessori environment. We do not wish to risk people

concluding that common-sense indicators such as children to being treated with respect, being able to self-select their activities and to have fun are not part of a quality Montessori learning environment.

The process of co-construction of the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga* will include reviewing, piloting and refining the essential elements and indicators for quality practice.

Other information yet to be finalised for inclusion in this section of the documentation are a glossary of Montessori terms including definitions of curriculum areas, brief

explanations of Montessori philosophy and practice, and the identification of implementation barriers and enablers.





A. Summary of Essential Elements

1.0 Montessori Learning Environment

1.1 Essential Element

The daily practising of Montessori philosophy is made possible by a clearly-defined Montessori curriculum.

1.2 Essential Element

Montessori focuses on fostering independence.

1.3 Essential Element

Montessori learning environments enable children to be active for long uninterrupted periods of time.

1.4 Essential Element

Montessori is a way of being – it does not stop and start at specific times or only occur indoors.

1.5 Essential Element

The Montessori environment enables the child to make independent choices for their learning.

1.6 Essential Element

Children have daily opportunities to learn and use practical life skills which enable them to develop concentration and to care for their environment, themselves, and others in the community.

1.7 Essential Element

The Montessori environment is rich with learning opportunities for the young child to explore his culture and the world.

1.8 Essential Element

Montessori educators use the interests and discoveries of all children to enrich the curriculum.

1.9 Essential Element

The Montessori curriculum is integrated with Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum and the state primary curriculum.

2.0 Montessori Adults

2.1 Essential Element

Montessori educators have specialist Montessori qualifications for the age group they teach, in addition to appropriate NZ early childhood, primary or secondary school teaching qualifications.

2.2 Essential Element

The number of adults is kept to the minimum, since the real work of learning belongs to the child.

2.3 Essential Element

The Montessori educator deliberately models the behaviours and attitudes that s/he wishes the children to learn.

2.4 Essential Element

The Montessori teacher makes careful observations of children and uses knowledge of the whole child to guide each child's learning.

2.5 Essential Element

Montessori teachers engage in regular professional development to enable them to be reflective practitioners and life-long learners.

2.6 Essential Element

The Montessori centre has a clear vision for how it delivers Montessori education and has an active cycle of reflection and self-review.

3.0 Montessori Learning Community

3.1 Essential Element

Montessori learning environments meet the developmental needs of children.

3.2 Essential Element

Children experience a respectful, safe and caring Montessori community.

3.3 Essential Element

The most optimal experience is gained when the child experiences a multi-age community that is aligned with the planes of development 3-6, 6-9 and 9-12 years-old groupings.

3.4 Essential Element

Montessori teachers are skilled in following the child – responding to the changing interests and needs of each child as a unique individual.

3.5 Essential Element

Montessori centres, staff, administrators and owners work in partnership with parents.

B. Indicators of Quality Practice

Indicators are currently inclusive of both Montessori early childhood and primary. Indicators specific to primary are marked in blue.

1.0 Montessori Learning Environment

1.1 Essential Element

The daily practice of Montessori philosophy is made possible by clearly defined Montessori curriculum.

Indicators of Quality Practice

At any time, the children in the classroom are engaged in different activities from across all curriculum areas.

The children are guided positively to make purposeful independent choices.

The child is free to choose from a range of materials/activities in the different curriculum areas at all times (practical life, sensorial, maths, language, culture, outdoor environment).

Teachers have a thorough understanding of the Montessori curriculum including the progression and extensions in each curriculum area.

Children are engaged in open-ended exploration with the Montessori materials and activities throughout the day.

The child is presented with materials/activities according to his interest and ability and from this repertoire of materials/activities he is then encouraged and able to choose his own work.

Learning materials and activities are arranged in curriculum areas eg. practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, and environmental studies, with culture woven through all areas.

The majority (90 percent) of learning resources available in the classroom are Montessori materials and activities. (See Appendix One).

Learning environment is aesthetically pleasing, clean, uncluttered and free of visual distraction..

The New Zealand state primary curriculum is met using a totally integrated Montessori curriculum, referred to as cosmic education, using a story-telling approach.

Contra-Indicators of Quality Practice

Children are restricted by age to certain curriculum areas or areas of the classroom

Children have limited access to outdoors.

Use of assigned worksheets, colouring sheets, stickers, and toys.

Children are directed in use of materials and activities and not given opportunity to explore or problem-solve.

Repetition is not expected nor encouraged.

The focus is to produce 'work to take home' to parents.

Children have expectations imposed eg. to do 'five year work' before lunch...or two pieces of 'challenging work' in the work session.

Some curriculum areas are given more value by the teacher.

1.2 Essential Element

Montessori focuses on fostering independence.

Indicators of Quality Practice

The Montessori environment is orderly and structured to facilitate independence.

The child is encouraged to work independently with minimal teacher direction once he has been introduced to a range of new learning activities.

Children work individually or in small, self-selected groups with very few, if any, whole-group lessons during the day.

The child is able to access and engage with activities independently or with help of a peer, without relying on constant adult assistance or direction.

Contra-Indicators/Undesirable Practice/Inferior Quality

Children are constantly directed to activities, with little independent choice.

The children seldom work independently of the adults.

The environment is 'owned' and maintained by the adults, not the children.



1.3 Essential Element

Montessori learning environments enable children to be active for long uninterrupted periods of time.

Indicators of Quality Practice

The class has uninterrupted time with the ideal being at least a three-hour period.
This time is free from interruption for whole-group activities such as snack or mat time or group learning where all children must join in.
Children develop the ability to concentrate for increasingly longer periods of time.
Children choose their activities independently and move from one activity to another with little adult input.
Montessori curriculum provides a scope and sequence but each child always moves at their own pace.
Many of the children are able to make choices independently, engage with the activity with concentration and finish when they are satisfied.
Children are supported by teachers to interact with each other and are free to choose to work and talk with each other, while respecting the other children's right to work without interruption.

Contra-Indicators

There is no uninterrupted time for the children to engage deeply with their self-chosen activities.
Children are not given time to engage, time to observe, and time to reflect.
Morning tea is a whole-class activity.
Children have extended mat times at beginning and end of the work times.
Children have to pack up indoors and go outside together as a whole group.
The uninterrupted time includes whole-group outdoor playtime or communal celebrations; these activities should be in addition to the uninterrupted work cycle.

1.4 Essential Element

Montessori is a way of being – it does not stop and start at specific times or occur only indoors!

Indicators of Quality Practice

The Montessori philosophy includes the materials, the adults, the interactions and their interconnections.
The Montessori learning environment is not limited to specific shelves or areas or rooms within the centre.
The child has access to quality Montessori environments and programmes throughout the day.
Outdoor environments are used as rich learning experiences for the children in the same way as the indoors; activities are purposeful, real, explorative and have a cycle of activity.
Many of the children are able to complete a cycle of activity – from choosing an activity, engaging with concentration, finishing when they feel satisfied, preparing for the next child, and returning it to the shelves.
Primary students have opportunities to extend their learning and make discoveries in their community by 'Going Out'; student-initiated and directed excursions beyond the classroom that arise organically from the interest and work of the child, not from a plan of instruction made by adults.

Contra-Indicators

Large-group activities occur frequently through the day and children are not free to choose whether they wish to join in.
Before/after school care or holiday care follows principles different from the Montessori classroom.
Children are not free to move from the indoor to outdoor environment during the day.
Children are restricted by age to certain curriculum areas.

1.5 Essential Element

The Montessori environment enables children to make independent choices for their learning.

Indicators of Quality Practice

The learning opportunities in the classroom are refreshed and rotated to cater for the needs and interests of the current group of learners. The layout of the environment is orderly and sequential so that the children learn quickly to find activities they are interested in. Everything in the environment is aesthetically pleasing and in good repair.

All materials should be child-sized, from crockery to woodwork and gardening tools; be real, clean, complete and inviting to the child.

The children have a range of purposeful opportunities to develop and refine their coordination of movement.

The environment has child-sized furniture that is light and can be moved, floors that do not deaden noise or prevent breakages.

Materials for the purpose should be used including glass, china, wood, brass, silver, copper with plastic kept to a minimum.

The colour of the furnishings, floors, walls should be soft and muted with limited wall displays to complement the brightly coloured Montessori materials.

In the primary classroom, there are a range of tools to encourage and foster children's independent exploration and inquiry.

Contra-Indicators

The environment is not prepared to support children gain independent skills.

Children cannot access learning materials without adult assistance.

The learning environment is not prepared to extend the learning needs of the older children.

1.6 Essential Element

Children have daily opportunities to learn and use practical life skills which enable them to develop concentration and to care for their environment, themselves, and others in the community.

Indicators of Quality Practice

All children are provided with real implements and given real responsibilities in the care of the environment and care of the self.

Practical life materials have an observable application in the classroom.

Children take the initiative to actively care for each other and their environment.

Practical life is integrated into the daily life in classroom (both ECE and primary)

Primary children are actively involved in maintaining the order of their classroom environment and making decisions about how the classroom could work for everyone's benefit.

Contra-Indicators

Practical life skills practised in the classroom have no application in the daily life of the community.

Adults carry out the majority of classroom tasks of preparing food, cleaning, taking care of the needs of the children.

1.7 Essential Element

The Montessori environment is rich with learning opportunities for the child to explore his culture and the world.

Indicators of Quality Practice

Social, emotional and spiritual learning experiences are valued as highly as academic learning experiences.

Rich cultural experiences including music, art, singing, drama, celebrations from other cultures, plant and animal studies, are regularly introduced in the environment.

The daily programme in both ECE and primary connects the child to nature including gardening and care of animals

Tikanga Māori and Te Reo Māori are incorporated meaningfully throughout the whole programme and all curriculum areas to reflect the society and time in which the children live.

Contra-Indicators

The focus of the Montessori early childhood programme is mainly to promote writing, reading and numeracy.

Montessori materials and activities across all cultural areas are not available to the children.



1.8 Essential Element

Montessori educators use the interests and discoveries of all children to enrich the classroom curriculum.

Indicators of Quality Practice

The learning environment is modified to meet the changing needs, interests and abilities of the children.
Each child progresses at their own pace and the teacher entices the child to explore new challenges and areas of inquiry.
Teachers are able to show examples of how they responded to a child's special interest in an area of discovery.
Teachers use observational notes to plan for each child and the class as a whole.

Contra-Indicators

Children are moved through the curriculum to the adult's timetable.
The child's interests and abilities are not considered as much as the 'age' or year level.

1.9 Essential Element

The Montessori curriculum is integrated with Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum and the state primary curriculum.

Indicators of Quality Practice

Teachers can show how Te Whāriki and Montessori are integrated as a cohesive whole.
Teachers can show how the New Zealand state primary and Montessori primary curriculum are integrated as a cohesive whole.

Contra-Indicators

The Montessori curriculum operates separately or in parallel with the New Zealand early childhood and primary curriculums.
New Zealand state curriculum is met using an approach different from the Montessori curriculum.

2.0 Montessori Adults

2.1 Essential Element

Montessori teachers have specialist Montessori qualifications for the age group they teach, in addition to appropriate New Zealand early childhood, primary or secondary school teaching qualifications.

Indicators of Quality Practice

Ideally, the Montessori qualified teacher should be the lead teacher in the classroom.
In Montessori classrooms with more than one teacher, the roles of each teacher should be defined; ideally the Montessori qualified teacher presents lessons (including practical life/grace and courtesy) and other teachers take roles of observer, classroom manager, and lead group and extension games.
Ideally, the lead teacher in the classroom has a Montessori teaching qualification for the age group they teach, with a face-to-face component of more than 160 hours (3-6) and 320 hours (6-12) plus supervised practice and teaching practice in Montessori classes.
Other staff in the classroom may have Montessori qualifications for the age group they work with or are working towards gaining qualifications.
All staff are actively engaged in Montessori-focused professional development each year.

Contra-Indicators

The lead teacher does not have any Montessori teacher qualification.
The qualification of the lead teacher has little or no face-to-face component and there is no plan in place to increase this.
There are no long-term plans for the lead teacher to gain a Montessori qualification with the face-to-face hours recommended by MANZ.

2.2 Essential Element

The number of adults is kept to the minimum, since the real work of learning belongs to the child.

Indicators of Quality Practice

There is a minimum of adults present, (in NZ 1:10 ECE children) and if the ratio is higher this can be explained and managed.
Interruptions or interventions by adults or whole-group times are kept to a minimum and children are able to develop the ability to concentrate and to become absorbed in their chosen activity.
Adult:child ratio and classroom routines encourage and foster independence of the children.
Attitudes, routines and classroom set-up actively protect the children's concentration.
Presentations of activities to children are protected from interruption by other adults and children.
The same Montessori teacher(s) is in the classroom each day.

Contra-Indicators

The child waits for adults to assist them rather than trying for themselves or asking other children for help.
Teachers spend prolonged periods of time with one child or group of children.
Teachers are too readily available for children and solving all problems for them/take over and direct children's learning.
Staff continually change and children cannot build reliable relationships.

2.3 Essential Element

The Montessori educator deliberately models the behaviours and attitudes that she wishes the children to learn.

Indicators of Quality Practice

Teachers have respectful relationships with the children, parents, and colleagues.
Teachers model respect for the child's choice of activity, and ability to focus and concentrate.
The adults are self-effacing and model quiet voices, move calmly and use body effective language.
Children are encouraged to ask teachers questions, and teachers enjoy conversations with children.
Teachers give frequent 'grace and courtesy' lessons to children – gently modelling and showing what behaviour is desirable in the classroom and beyond.
The relationship between the teacher and child is one of encouragement and support.
Teachers exhibit grace, warmth, enthusiasm and commitment to the community of children.
Children are free to do anything appropriate to the ground rules of the community but are redirected promptly when needed.
Grace and courtesy is practised in the primary classroom by using stories, role plays and appealing to the children's sense of justice and moral development, as well as using their need to socialise and practise humour.

Contra-Indicators

Teachers show little enjoyment in their interactions with the children.
Teachers do not model respectful interactions with other adults in the environment.
Teachers exhibit behaviour that is disrespectful of the children such as talking loudly, interrupting children and demanding or ordering, correcting children in front of others.

2.4 Essential Element

The Montessori teacher makes careful observations of children and uses knowledge of the whole child to guide the child's learning.

Indicators of Quality Practice

Teachers are continuously observing the children's interests, strengths, ability and dispositions.
Teachers make focused observations a priority each day and use this to inform planning for individual children and the whole class.
There is a systematic way of recording observations and each child's needs and areas of interest.
A variety of assessment processes are used to record student development and progress and to share with parents in a variety of formal and informal ways.
Teachers are able to focus on one child; while maintaining an awareness of rest of the class.
Primary teachers ignite the child's imagination with the use of story across all curriculum areas.



Contra-Indicators

Teachers are constantly engaged with children with no time to make and record observations.
 Teachers do not have information that allows them to plan adequately for each child.
 Teachers have little understanding of the Montessori planes of development to determine what is developmentally appropriate for each child.
 There is little sharing of information/learning between staff.
 Primary teachers have the majority of children to fulfil a list of required daily work tasks.

2.5 Essential Element

Montessori teachers engage in regular professional development to enable them to be reflective practitioners and life-long learners.

Indicators of Quality Practice

All staff are actively engaged in ongoing Montessori professional development.
 Professional development focusing on Montessori philosophy and practice is a priority and needs are assessed, planned, and budgeted for each year.
 Staff meet regularly to discuss and share ideas following professional development.
 Staff are engaged in peer mentoring to apply learning from professional development.
 Teachers have regular opportunities to observe in other Montessori settings.

Contra-Indicators

Teachers attend early childhood or primary professional development but do not attend Montessori-focused professional development.

2.6 Essential Element

The Montessori centre has a clear vision for how it delivers Montessori education and has an active cycle of reflection and self-review.

Indicators of Quality Practice

The centre or school provides written information about its philosophy and vision for its children and future direction and growth.
 The school or centre's charter, operations manual, policies and procedures are available to parents at all times.
 There is regular reflection on the school or centre's long-term goals and plans for the future and a process for sharing with the stakeholders.
 The centre or school has a long-term plan to ensure they have Montessori-qualified staff.
 Self-review is integral process in the centre or school and uses the Montessori Journey to Excellence in the self-review process.

Contra-Indicators

Parents cannot access information about the centre or school operation and plans.
 There is little consultation with the parents, individually or as a group.

3.0 Montessori Learning Community

3.1 Essential Element

Montessori learning environments meet the developmental needs of children.

Indicators of Quality Practice

Children have freedom of choice of activity, within the limits of their developmental readiness and freedom to learn at their own pace.

There are learning materials and experiences available to meet the interests and developmental needs of all children in the community.

The child has full freedom of movement between different areas of the classroom and between inside and outside.

The child's time is uninterrupted by compulsory group activities.

Children work in pairs, small groups or on their own as they choose.

Teachers are approachable and responsive to children's thirst for knowledge.

Children have opportunities and appropriate materials provided which allow for creative thinking and creative expression.

The children have the freedom to choose their own work but are presented with new work regularly to increase their repertoire of choice and provide more opportunities for them to uncover their interests.

Contra-Indicators

Teachers have little understanding of the Montessori planes of development to determine what is developmentally appropriate for each child.

3.2 Essential Element

Children experience a respectful, safe and caring Montessori community.

Indicators of Quality Practice

The Montessori classroom is a community in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected.

There are responsive, respectful relationships between the teachers and children, children and children, between teachers and between teachers and families.

Children under six attend their Montessori learning community and interact with the same group of children and teachers each day, ideally attending at least five mornings, building to five full days by the time the child is five years.

The fee structure of the centre encourages five-day attendance for children under six.

Staff can talk knowledgeably to parents about the benefits of five-day attendance for children under six.

Teachers demonstrate the ability to establish clear, reasonable and consistent guidelines for behaviour of children.

Children are secure in routines and expectations of the teachers and other children in the community.

Children interact respectfully with each other and the adults, and are guided by their peers and teachers to develop appropriate social skills.

Children learn the social skills involved in being part of a community such as sharing, turn-taking, negotiation and co-operation.

The classroom functions as a community with each child playing his or her own part and contributing to the daily life and functioning of the class in a positive manner.

Students play a real role in deciding and managing classroom activities and routines from preparing food to be shared, community lunches, learning conflict resolution skills, hosting class meetings to presenting lessons to classmates and doing community service projects.

Contra-Indicators

Teachers work only with children of specific ages or in particular curriculum areas

Children are not free to interact with each other and do not have skills to show kindness to others

Children are constantly disturbing others and are disturbed by adults and children.

Lack of consistency in teachers each day does not allow children to develop respectful caring relationships with familiar adults.

Daily routines do not respect the child's flow learning eg. no uninterrupted time, many group activities, settling routines that do not meet children's needs.



3.3 Essential Element

The most optimal experience is gained when the child experiences a multi-age community that is aligned with the planes of development 3-6, 6-9 and 9-12 years-old groupings.

Indicators of Quality Practice

Positive social interactions are supported in a mixed age group.

The class includes children of all ages in the mixed age group and there is a gender balance in the class. (eg. 3-6 year-olds, 6-9 year-olds, 9-12 year-olds or 6-12 year-olds).

Teachers can explain the importance of the three-year mixed-age group programme to parents.

There is a school, or centre, policy that is clear about the rationale for the age at which children start and leave the Montessori programme.

In a centre for 3-6 year-olds the centre facilitates the retention of five year-olds.

In Montessori primary the school facilitates the retention of 11 year-olds.

Ongoing communications occur with parents regarding their children spending at least three years in the ECE and primary environment.

The delivery of a rich Montessori primary programme is enabled by children who have already developed independent work habits and are familiar with the Montessori approach, with a working knowledge of and respect for the Montessori materials and activities in and out of the classroom environment.

Montessori primary staff can talk to parents knowledgeably about the benefits of students completing the three year cycle in 9-12 class.

Contra-Indicators

Children segregated by age groupings, for example new entrant classes, extended day or five-year-old classes.

Five year-olds are not engaged in work befitting of their age and ability in the preschool classroom.

Older children not being sufficiently prepared for their next learning environment.

Children starting at five years old in Montessori primary classes.

3.4 Essential Element

Montessori teachers are skilled in following the child – responding to the changing interests and needs of each child as a unique individual.

Indicators of Quality Practice

Teachers and parents value the child's social, spiritual and emotional learning as highly as academic or intellectual learning.

Teachers are aware of the Montessori principles which underpin their ability to 'follow the child' i.e are aware of the physical and psychic development of the child including the sensitive periods, human tendencies and characteristics of the plane of development of children

Children are supported to continue with an activity or project to their own satisfaction for as long as they are able.

Teachers engage respectfully with children and their questions and requests.

Teachers give uninterrupted, exciting and enticing lessons to children, to capture the interest of and meet the needs of individual children, rather than in a rote way intended for many or any

Teachers work creatively to ensure that the child has experience in all areas of the environment..

A wide range of interests, abilities and learning styles are catered for and celebrated within the classroom.

Teachers engage in meaningful and enriching conversations with children daily

Teachers are aware when it is necessary to 'present' with minimal speaking.

Teachers ensure that the child's developing concentration is guarded at ALL times.

Teachers positively support and guide children to choose activities.

In under-six programmes teachers introduce the later exercises, the games and the associated language extensions to small groups of children.

Montessori primary students take an active role in planning their work and setting goals for themselves.

Montessori primary children have the freedom to choose their own work and activities – they do not have the freedom to choose to do nothing.

Primary teachers hold regular conferences with children to allow them to ascertain where they are in each area of the curriculum, what help is needed and what future lessons required.

Contra-Indicators

Children are not free to ask for and receive lessons from teachers.
 Children are not given the respect or freedom to work to their own timetable with regards to length of time spent on an activity or numbers of times they repeat an activity.
 Children are not given time to pursue areas of interest to their own satisfaction.
 Children are forced to attend lessons when they are adamantly opposed, or are being forced, to return to a work that did not interest them.

3.5 Essential Element

Montessori centres and schools, staff, administrators and owners work in partnership with parents.

Indicators of Quality Practice

Family and whanau are valued members of the Montessori community.
 The centre or school actively fosters a dialogue with parents to promote understanding of Montessori philosophy and values.
 There are introduction or orientation processes for both the parent and child to the Montessori learning environment.
 There are regular opportunities for parents to learn about Montessori philosophy and practice.
 Parents are provided with regular information about their child's learning, development and experiences.
 Parent support networks are promoted and enable new parents be included in the community.
 Parents are informed about what is planned for their child's learning and receive feedback in a variety of ways.

Contra-Indicators

Parents do not have information about the routines and expectations of the Montessori class.
 Parents do not receive information about their child's learning and development. It is unclear to parents how the classroom works, what the routines are and how they can support their child to settle in the classroom.
 There are no clear processes to enable parents to seek feedback on their child or to give feedback, offer suggestions and make comments to the centre or school.





Section Five

Mentoring in the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te Ara ki huhuatanga*

The working group regards the development of mentor support as crucial to the success of the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga*. Mentors could work within and alongside centres and schools over a review period. The Montessori Journey to Excellence has the potential to provide a framework for dialogue, communication, relationship building and interaction between mentors and Montessori centres and schools.

Defining the role of mentors, developing a mentoring programme, and providing professional development for mentors from within the Montessori professional community is the next focus in the journey.

An evaluation of the New Zealand Teachers Council Induction and Mentoring Guidelines Pilot Programme in early childhood centres, schools and secondary school will provide information that will assist in the development of mentoring within and

between Montessori early childhood and primary schools. Sankar et al. (2012) noted that in the pilot programmes “some groups had begun to think of mentoring as a collective, team-orientated process that provides the underlying platform for professional learning in an educational context” (p. 48).

Professional development for mentors, involving key decision makers in the mentoring process, dedicating time for mentoring, establishing supportive networks for mentors, mentoring as a

team and the role of external facilitators (Sankar, et al., 2012) will be factors to consider in the development of the Montessori Journey to Excellence mentor programme.

The working group has done detailed scoping work investigating the role of mentoring and further work will be done in 2012, starting at the 2012 conference.

We hope you can become involved in developing mentoring for the Montessori Journey to Excellence *Te ara ki huhuatanga*.

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