

Why do Montessori schools begin with Phase-In?



Phase-in provides a more gentle transition from time spent at home with family to time spent at school with less familiar teachers and friends. Beginning the school year with a parent or close family member near by can help insure a positive experience. As the time children spend at school lengthens, they will more easily separate from family members, joining the class, curious and ready to engage with materials, and start to reach out to new friends. They become more comfortable and independent, knowing their classroom is a safe, nurturing environment. We believe phase-in provides children with the early steps to be on this path, giving them a foundation that will support them, to be excited to learn and be at school with friends.

Though it might not be long for your child to be comfortable at school, we believe this slower introduction to the new school year works best for young children (and most of us adults too).

By beginning with smaller groups, we have more opportunity to observe, start to bond with children individually, and create calm, peaceful atmosphere. Additional pieces of classroom routines and basic ground rules, as well as more materials and activities are added to the classroom over time. Phase-in allows children to become gradually accustomed to the length of the morning program, and supports learning about their classroom and materials in manageable pieces, so as not to overwhelm them. During the last days of phase-in, the entire class will spend more time together.

For older children, it is also helpful for them to experience these introductions of routines, as the younger children will look to them for clarity and confirmation of the ground rules. Phase-in helps sets the tone for the class, guiding everyone as they learn to make choices, become increasingly independent, and come together as a community, with respect and care for each other and their environment.



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