



Validation Project Overview

There is no trademark on the use of “Montessori” in the public domain. Any school or program can call itself Montessori but be lacking in any of the elements that would be considered necessary to implement the philosophy and curriculum as taught in accredited or nationally recognized Montessori teacher preparation programs.

The **SCMA Validation Project** is one answer to the question “What is Montessori?” By determining baseline, threshold components for participating Montessori schools, SCMA has established a Validating Organization to assure state agencies, policy makers, funders, and most importantly, families that the Montessori schools in SC have a measure of quality they can trust.

The SCMA Key Montessori Components~

- A philosophical approach that is consistent with the evidenced-based educational methods and areas of instruction as recommended by the scientific observations, research, writings, and instruction of Dr. Maria Montessori.
- At least one lead teacher, in each classroom, with a Montessori credential from a MACTE accredited teacher preparation program at the level being taught.
- A multi-aged group of students based on the Montessori Planes of Development, and the developmental readiness of each child, in every classroom and level. (Ideal age groupings: 0-3; 2 ½ -6; 6-9; 9-12; 12-15)
- An established student/teacher ratio and group size consistent with the Montessori system of education (and as recommended by AMI, AMS, IMC, and MEPI) for each class and age grouping taught.
- A Montessori curriculum, and instructional material requirements, to implement the program for each class and age grouping taught. At the Secondary I and II levels, this requirement would be met with Essential Elements for secondary programming.
- A daily schedule that provides an uninterrupted work period of a minimum of 2 ½ -3 hours (with 3 being the ideal). Enrichment programs and transition times are scheduled to accommodate these work periods.
- A program leader, with a Montessori credential and classroom experience, who contributes to decision making on an administrative level on policies and procedures as they relate to Montessori philosophy, pedagogy, curriculum, and implementation of a high- fidelity Montessori program. (For example: administrator, educational coordinator, level coordinator, Montessori curriculum coach, and/or mentor/master Montessori educator.
- Meet all federal, state, and local regulatory and statutory requirements for the health and safety of the students.

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Benefits of the SCMA Validation Project~

Montessori Schools~

- Assures that a validated school is providing a Montessori program with key components
- Assures enrolling families that this is a “true” Montessori program
- The SC Department of Education, and SC Department of Social Services have a measure of “quality” that assures the health, and safety in programs they approve.
- As state policy and rules and regulations change, the criteria for a Montessori school remain stable and protected. With increased trust, requirements can be safely modified to provide for more fully implemented programming.

Families~

- Provides assurance that when a school says it is Montessori, it really is
- Provides confidence and assurance that their school of choice meets a measure of quality they can trust

SC DOE and SC Department of Social Services~

- Gives a standard “definition” of what it means to be a Montessori program
- Builds trust in the system of Montessori education
- Provides assurance of quality that can lead to full implementation of Montessori education in regulations
- Provides “consumer protection” that Montessori schools have met key components

Process for participating schools~

- Complete an on-line application
- Complete the School Questionnaire with needed documentation
- Have an on-site Verifer Team visit

For more information contact: