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Holistic teaching methods emphasize children's interests, growth

By Bob Sullivan For Custom Publications



When considering what private school best fits a child's needs, keep in mind several holistic teaching methods that are gaining popularity among educators and parents. Here's what parents need to know.

The Montessori Method

Montessori Centres
563 W. Westfield Blvd.
Indianapolis, IN 46208
(317) 257-2224
www.montessoricentres.com

Northside Montessori
1224 E. 52nd St.
Indianapolis, IN 46205
(317) 251-2979
www.northsidemontessori.org

Community Montessori School
9069 E. 141st St.
Fishers, IN 46038
(317) 774-8551
www.communitymontessori.info

The Montessori Method pre-kindergarten – eighth grade

The Montessori Method was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori in Italy in the late 1800s. Montessori created interactive projects based on how she observed children learning. The same materials are used today.

"Everything's the same — only the clothes have changed," joked Lynn Boone, director of Montessori Centres Inc., on the northeast side of Indianapolis.

Montessori emphasizes self-directed activities overseen by a teacher observing which projects students choose. The

teacher adapts the child's environment to suit his or her developmental level.

"Work is broken down into four rough categories for well-rounded development — language, math, sensorial and practical life," Boone said.

The method shows equal success with gifted pre-K children as well as those suspected of having Down syndrome, dyslexia, autism or other learning disorders.

"It's key to catch the kids early," Boone said. "It works particularly well when we can help them pre-K."

Boone calls the Montessori option at Indianapolis Public Schools 56, 67 and 91 "the best-kept secret in town."

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Reggio Emilia Approach pre-kindergarten

Like the Montessori Method, the Reggio Emilia Approach enables children to take an active part in learning based on their interests.

"If the children take an interest in something — let's say insects — the teacher facilitates a project to help them follow that interest and learn," said Ron Smith, director of the Warren Early Childhood Center.

Smith and his staff successfully adapted project-based learning at the center in 2004.

"My staff spent several years studying the Reggio Emilia Approach and adapted several of its concepts for our program," he explained. "We address all the skills children need to prepare for kindergarten while providing opportunities to think critically about the world around them."

The Warren Early Childhood Center is part of the Indianapolis Reggio Collaborative, which includes four learning centers in Lawrence Township.

Reggio Emilia Approach

Indianapolis Reggio Collaborative
www.enegene.com

Warren Early Childhood Center
1401 N. Mitthoefer Road
Indianapolis, IN 46229
(317) 869-4750
http://earlychildhood.warren.k12.in.us/home

MSD Lawrence Township Early Learning Centers
To reach any of next seven centers, call (317) 423-8216 or visit https://elc.itschools.org/index.php.

The Early Learning Center at Amy Beverland
11660 Fox Road
Indianapolis, IN 46236

The Early Learning Center at Brook Park
5249 N. David St.
Indianapolis, IN 46226

The Early Learning Center at Mary Castle
8510 E. 82nd St.
Indianapolis, IN 46256

The Early Learning Center at Winding Ridge
11845 E. 46th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46236

Saint Mary's Child Center
www.stmaryschildcenter.org

Thompson Building – Main
901 Martin Luther King Jr. St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
(317) 635-1491

Gilliatte Building – Fort
9230 Hawkins Road
Indianapolis, IN 46216
(317) 543-0782