



## ***Lower Elementary***

Our Lower Elementary program is a beautiful community to observe. Just like all the other Montessori levels, Lower Elementary is based on the belief that children learn best through movement, and work with their hands. Lower Elementary provides academic, social, and emotional support to help each child reach their full potential. The classroom is a happy community of learners. Multi-age groupings of children ages 6 – 9 in which children can collaborate and socialize. These varied-age relationships strengthen the entire community.

### ***LE Social-Emotional Learning***

Lower Elementary classes at FWM are conscious communities where children learn to support each other's academic and social-emotional growth.

They learn to make wise choices that meet goals and expectations. Elders facilitate meeting circles to celebrate the community, to solve problems, and to resolve conflicts. In this way, children learn about their responsibilities as individuals within a group.

### ***LE Language***

Lower Elementary children use language as a vehicle to explore their imaginations, to aid their research about the natural world, and to develop communication skills with friends and teachers. The curriculum offers a balanced approach to literacy.

Children enter the Lower Elementary Program with a wide variety of language abilities and experiences. Some are fluent readers of chapter books, while others have learned their sounds, and have begun to combine them into words.

Developmentally, children between six and nine years are imaginative, curious about the world around them, and focused on their peer relationships. The Language Arts Program capitalizes on this developmental period by encouraging children to use language as a vehicle, to explore their imaginations, to aid their research about the natural world, and to develop communication skills with friends and teachers.

Our Lower Elementary language curriculum offers a balanced approach to literacy. We bolster children's foundation in phonemic awareness and phonics, and we build their vocabulary by exploring word patterns and roots. The same word studies demystify the challenges of spelling. By reading to them and with them, we improve their fluency. We teach many reading comprehension strategies, including predicting and inferring, purpose setting, retelling, questioning, monitoring, visualizing, connecting, deciding what is important, and evaluating. Reading/writing workshops reveal to children how their reading informs their writing, and visa versa.

Lower Elementary teachers use imaginative stories and Montessori's dramatic grammar materials to introduce the structural concepts of language.

In class meetings, through resolving conflicts, and in oral presentations, children develop both expressive and receptive language skills.

### ***LE Math***

Lower Elementary students construct math concepts, and practice procedures using the extraordinary Montessori math materials.

The Lower Elementary mathematics curriculum is built on the shoulders of the previous work done by children in the Children's House. Following teachers' introductions, students construct concepts, and practice procedures using the extraordinary Montessori math materials. They use familiar coding systems to explore sophisticated concepts.

The materials allow for repetition with variety, so concepts can be mastered, expanded, applied, and revised. The curriculum is organized around the following objectives:

- Acquisition of the concepts of numbers, quantity, and place value
- Introduction to operations, including addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; operations on fractions with like and unlike denominators
- Development of number theory including studies of multiples and factors
- Development of a vocabulary of mathematical terms, including terms and keywords for operations, fractions terms, and nomenclature of plane geometric figures, angles, and types of lines
- Memorization of math facts
- Mathematical problem solving
- Introduction to money and measurement



Introduction to concepts and nomenclature of geometric shapes and solids including plane figures, triangles, lines, angles, polygons, circles, congruence/similarity/equivalence, and solid geometric figures.

### ***LE History/Geography***

The Montessori “cosmic curriculum” for Lower Elementary students focuses on the common bonds among humans, and it offers an optimistic, forward-looking approach to global solutions.

In the Lower Elementary years, children are highly curious about their world, its origin, and their place within it. In the Children’s House, they have learned the names of continents, countries, and land and water forms. In the Lower Elementary class, this learning is applied to geography. As they study cultures, they learn about the interconnectedness of climate and lifestyle. They explore the similarities and differences among peoples around the globe. They learn about biomes, and how these boundaries seem more real than political borders. They come to appreciate the interdependence of human beings, and all other organisms on our planet.

Students explore various ways to represent the passage of time, and they learn about clocks, calendars, and timelines. They learn that human beings, throughout history, have sought to understand our origins, and our relationships. Dr. Montessori called this study a “cosmic curriculum” because it focuses on the common bonds among humans, and it offers an optimistic, forward-looking approach to global solutions. Teachers use dramatic storytelling to plant seeds of interest. Children begin to understand the impact of one’s personal history on one’s own development, and they start to apply that understanding to the role history plays in the development of culture.

### ***LE Science***

Lower Elementary children’s questions lead naturally to studies of how the world was formed, its physical laws, and the origins and evolution of life.

In the Lower Elementary years, children are highly curious about their world, its origin, and their place within it. Their questions lead naturally to studies of how the world was formed, its physical laws, the origins and evolution of life, and the evolution of humans.



The Earth Science curriculum is a systems-study of our planet, with explorations of fundamental forces of the universe, and how they manifest themselves in the water cycle, plate tectonics, mountain building, and movements of currents of air and water.

Life Science focuses on comparison of the body structure, and functioning of various vertebrates, the anatomy and life cycles of various plants, and an introduction to classification of organisms.

Physical Science studies include explorations of light, sound and magnetism.

Most of all, we encourage inquiry. Lower Elementary teachers respond to students' questions by supporting them to investigate on their own, by using a knowledge base or by forming a hypothesis and testing it.

### ***LE Anti-Bias***

Through literature, discussions and in-class visits, LE children learn about diversity, identity and the problem of bias.

### ***LE Practical Life***

Practical Life activities in Lower Elementary revolve around the child's natural interest in peer relationships, and in the world around them.

While the Practical Life curriculum builds upon the skills developed in the Children's House, Elementary students focus on the completion of the task, rather than the earlier concentration on sequence and process. For this reason, elementary practical life activities highlight specific and collective goals.

Elementary students work to create a caring classroom community. Teachers guide them in developing the patience and listening ability that they need to help others, to mediate conflicts, and to observe ground rules. As they grow up in the community, they observe and then adopt the special responsibilities attendant to being an elder to younger classmates. They learn how to be a responsible individual within a group. They naturally become interested in differences among their friends. They investigate and understand varying learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and interests.



Practical life activities for this age group are often interwoven with learning responsibilities. With increased academic demands comes a greater need for independence. Teachers support Lower Elementary students to identify their individual challenges, and they expect that each student will work to overcome them. For Lower Elementary students, time management, focus, self-care, caring for the environment, and caring for the community are among the practical life skills integral to building confidence and life skills.

