

## **AMS Position Statement on Information Technology**

*"What purpose would education serve in our days unless it helped humans to a knowledge of the environment to which they have to adapt themselves?" - Maria Montessori*

The American Montessori Society encourages and supports exploring the use of technology in Montessori educational environments, especially at the elementary and higher levels. Using technology is appropriate and desirable for teachers and school administrators, and also for a variety of student uses. Intelligently integrated into the Montessori environment, technology can be a valuable communications tool and may promote traditional Montessori tenets.

Information technology is an important part of the world in which our children live and which they will inherit. It has become an essential communications medium of modern times. A guide for using technology should allow children to follow their own interests, to learn as appropriate to their individual styles, and to achieve independence as lifelong learners. Although children in the two and a half to six year age group need to have extensive manual and other direct sensorial activities, there are uses that can be implemented by the director, for material preparation, planning and record keeping. At higher levels, technology may enhance student research through the ability to access and exchange information in global learning communities. Both parents and teachers must be conscientious in teaching and modeling appropriate and responsible use of technology.

The basis of adding any new or different piece of material to the Montessori environment must be to nurture the development of the child. Technology is no different. Just as extensive training is required for the correct use of the traditional Montessori materials, there is certainly a need for careful guidance in the appropriate use of classroom technology. As with the Montessori materials, there is a learning curve for the suitable use of technology. In the application of technology in the Montessori classroom the key principle should be that it must be carefully thought out and integrated so that it complements, but does not replace any part of the Montessori approach or curriculum.

As we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, our children will be expected to have digital age literacy, inventive thinking skills, effective communication skills, and high productivity skills. Efficient use of technology as well as basic Montessori practice can aid in achieving these objectives.

It is important to remember that technology and its applications, such as computers and software, evolve and change rapidly from year to year. The needs of the youngest children however do not change with the changes in society. As they grow and become socialized, responsible use of technology will be a part of their classrooms and their lives. Because of the rapidly changing nature of technology, its application in Montessori environments will need to be under relatively continuous review. Such an ongoing review must consider technology's place in the Montessori environment and the developmental appropriateness of available software.

Maria Montessori used extensive scientific observation to uncover the "secret of childhood." From those understandings, she created beautiful hands-on materials that enhance learning through the senses. Technology offers us another tool and another method of discovery. Using Montessori's methods of observing will help us determine the place of technology in the Montessori world.