



Colorado Charter Schools Annual Conference

February 25-27, 2026
Denver Marriott Tech Center



PRESENTED BY



Got Montessori? A Framework for Ensuring Model Fidelity & Organizational Sustainability

**Seth D. Webb, Director of School Services
National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector (NCMPS)**

Iris
February 26, 2026 | 11:00am – 12:00pm
Quality: School Models



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conference
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Colorado League of
Charter Schools



We make it our priority to **advocate** for high-quality public charter schools across Colorado.



Be a part of the action.





Got Montessori?

A Framework for Ensuring Model Fidelity & Organizational Sustainability

CLCS Annual Conference | February 26, 2026

Seth Webb

Director of School Services

NATIONAL CENTER for
MONTESSORI in the
PUBLIC SECTOR

NATIONAL CENTER for
MONTESSORI in the **PUBLIC SECTOR**

NCMPS transforms lives by cultivating equitable, accessible, sustainable, and humanizing public education through Montessori.

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NATIONAL CENTER for
MONTESSORI in the **PUBLIC SECTOR**

We believe equitable, accessible, sustainable public Montessori programs have the power to disrupt racism, poverty, and structural inequality and transform lives and societies for peace and justice.



Assets and Tools

- » Montessori Curriculum to Standards Alignment (MCSA)
- » Developmental Environment Rating Scale (DERS)
- » Lesson Study Suite
- » Reflective Practice Inventories
- » Fundamental Commitments for Public Montessori

NCMPS TOOLS
ARE USED IN
**MORE THAN
HALF OF ALL**
public Montessori schools



Professional Learning Courses

- » Coaches Training
- » Child Study Training
- » Assistants Training
- » Montessori Fundamentals for School Leaders
- » Data-Driven Goal Setting
- » Special Education Support

1,200+
PARTICIPANTS



School Support

- » Coaching and Consultation
- » Whole School Assessment—
Essential Elements Review
- » Start-up and implementation support

30+
SCHOOLS SERVED
with tailored services

A Home for Public Montessori

We sustain Montessori in the public sector through a community network, teacher training, school support, and field-tested tools.

www.public-montessori.org

A (Brief) History of Public Montessori in the United States

- **1911 - 1916** Private Montessori Programming Booms & Fades
- **1950s - 1970s** Montessori Education Returns
 - **1967**
 - First Public Program Opens at the Hilltop School (Reading, OH)
 - US Patent & Trademark Office Puts “Montessori” in the Public Domain
- **1970s - 1990s** Magnet Schools Drive the Growth of More Programs Nationwide
 - Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois, Colorado, Puerto Rico...
- **1990s - 2010s** Charters and Choice Programming Foster Additional Growth
 - South Carolina, Florida, Arizona, Texas, California...
- **2010s +** Outcomes Research, Public Awareness, and Declining Enrollment Fuel Expansion
 - Interest in Whole-child, Personalized, and Learner-centered education

591 Public Montessori Programs in the United States

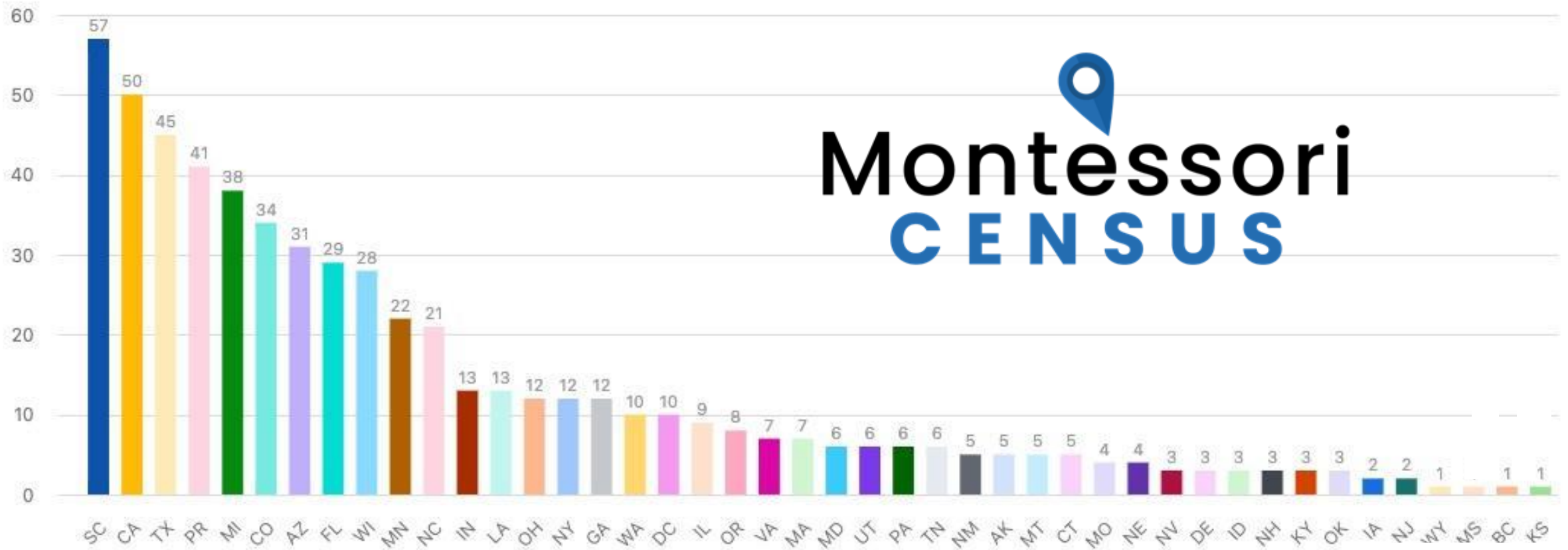


DC
42 states
Puerto Rico
~200,000 students

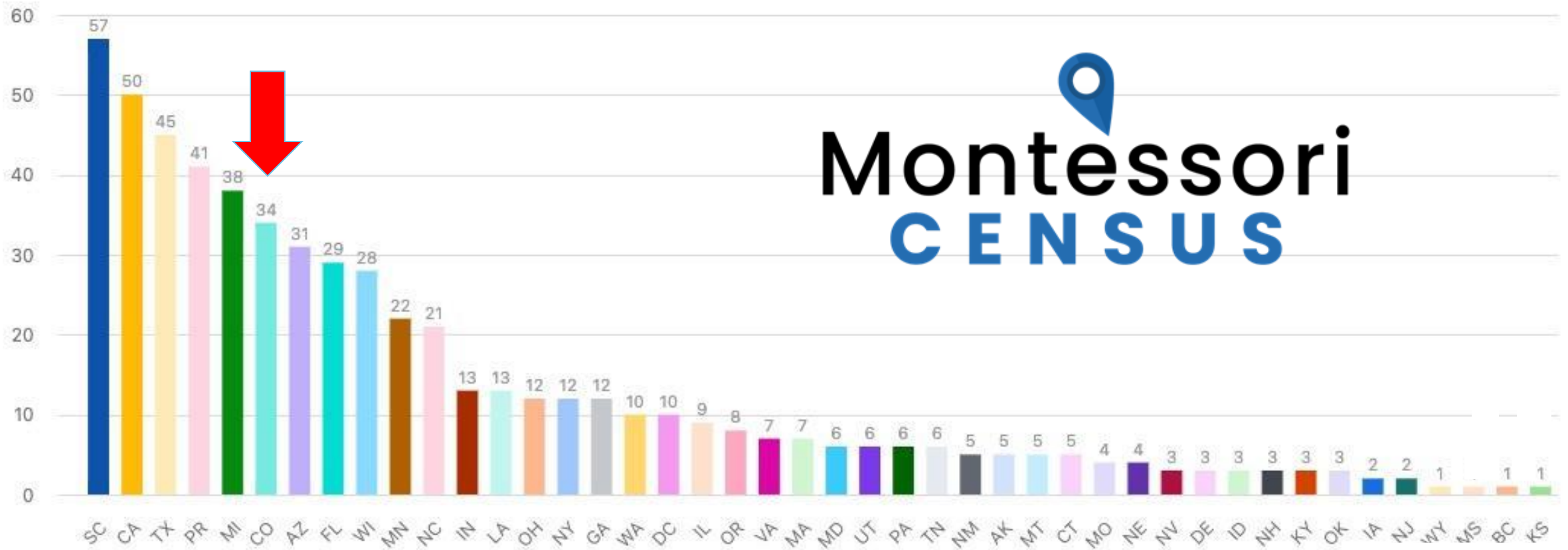


MONTESSORI
SCHOOLS & DATA

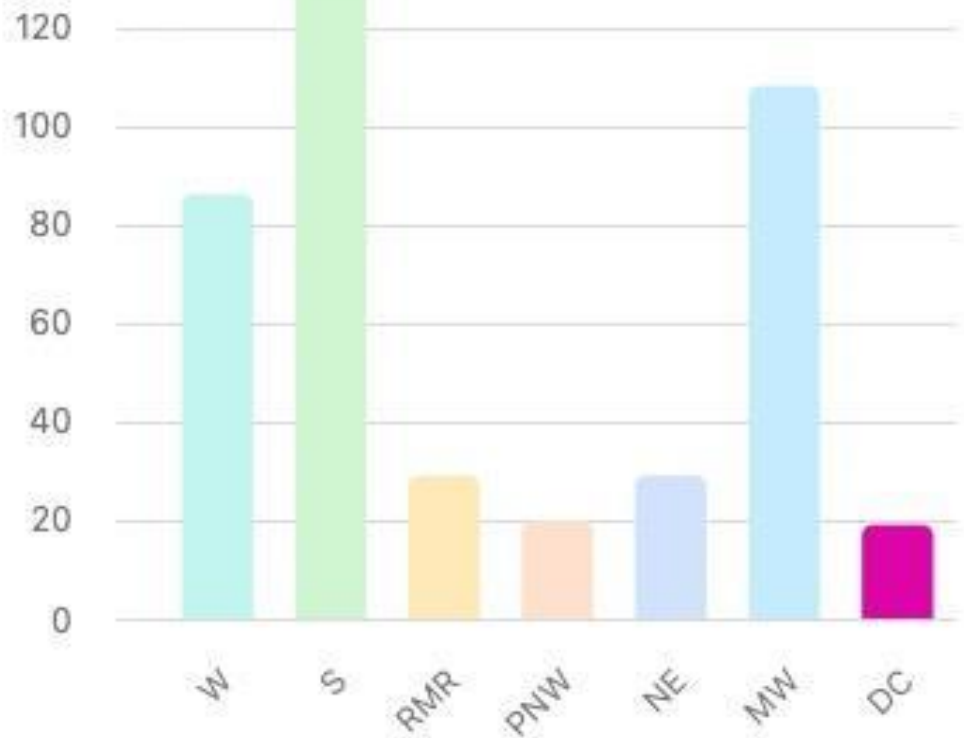
Distribution of US Public Montessori Programs



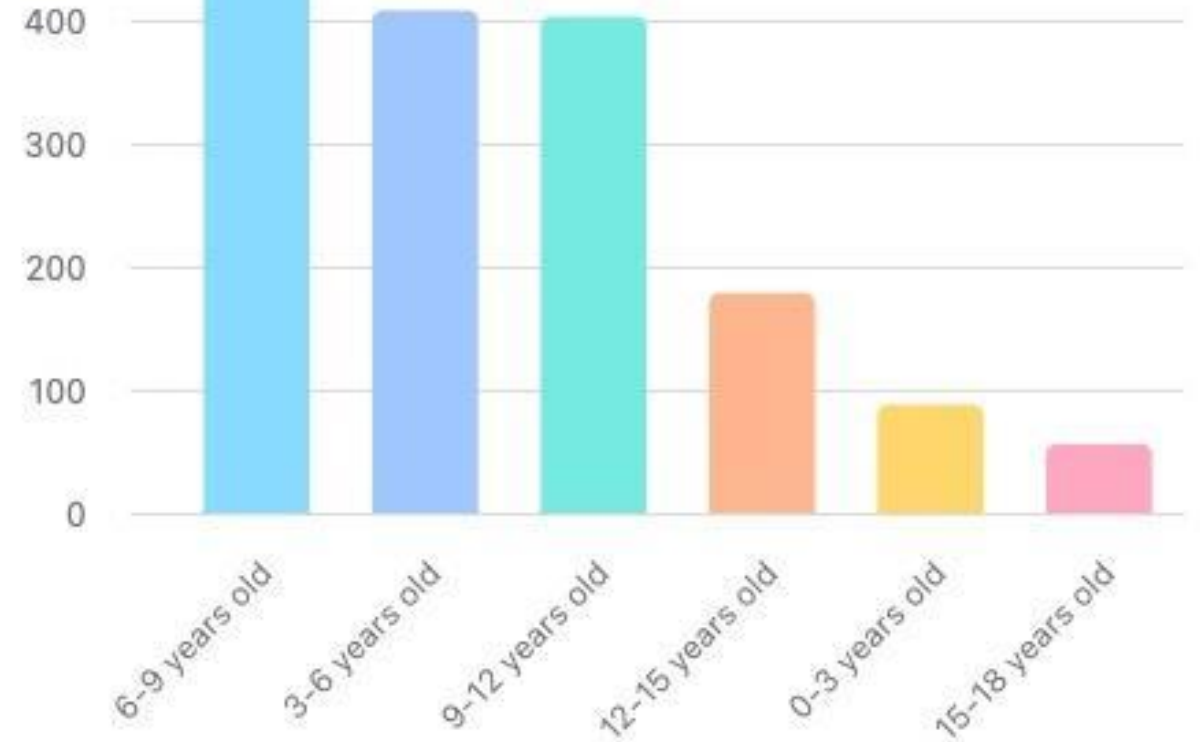
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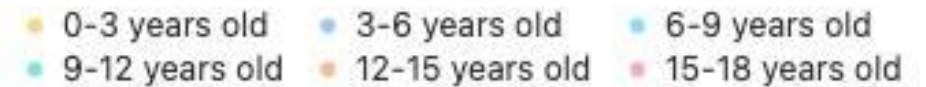
Regions & Age Demographics of US Public Montessori Programs



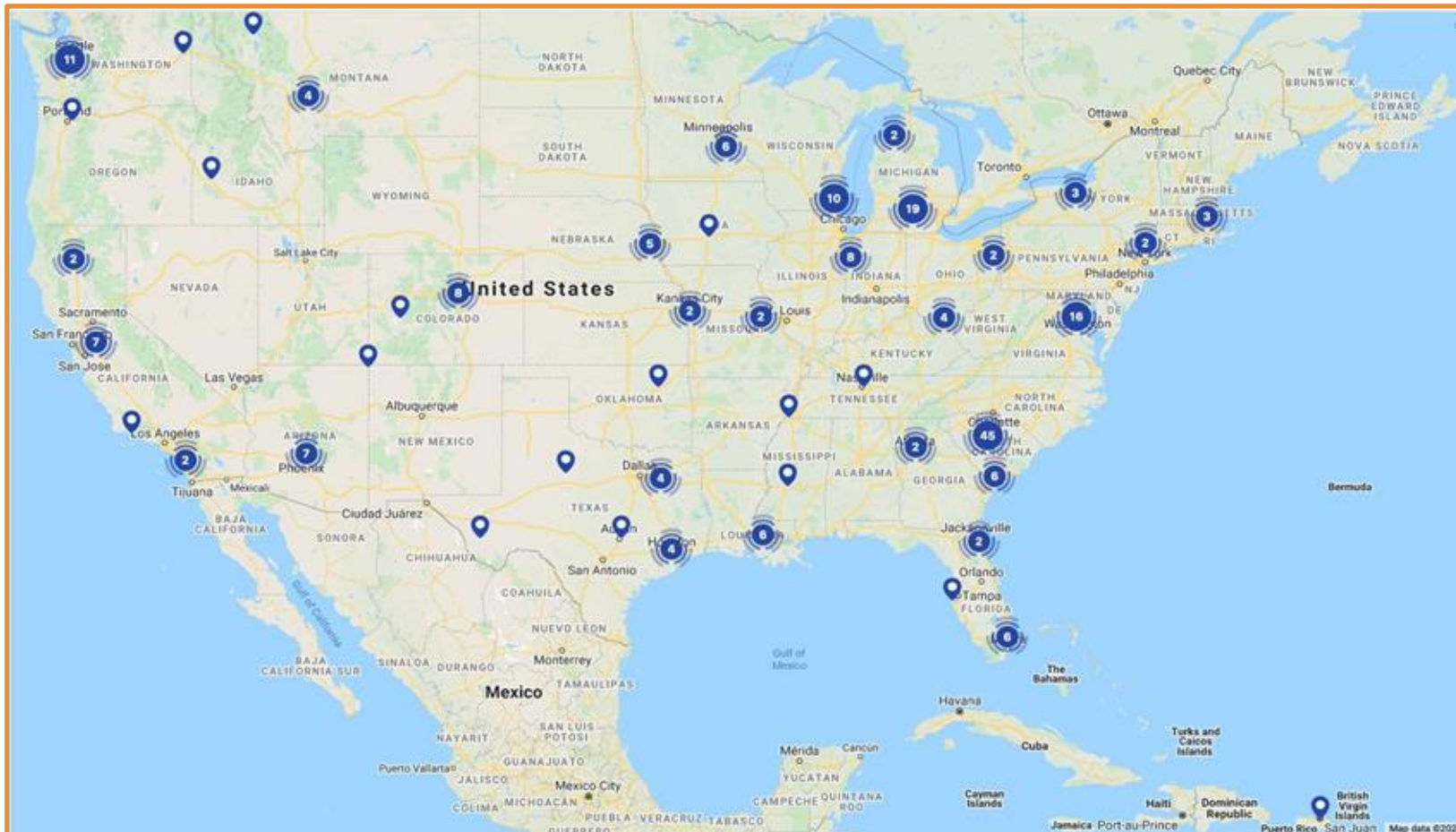
Region



Ages Served



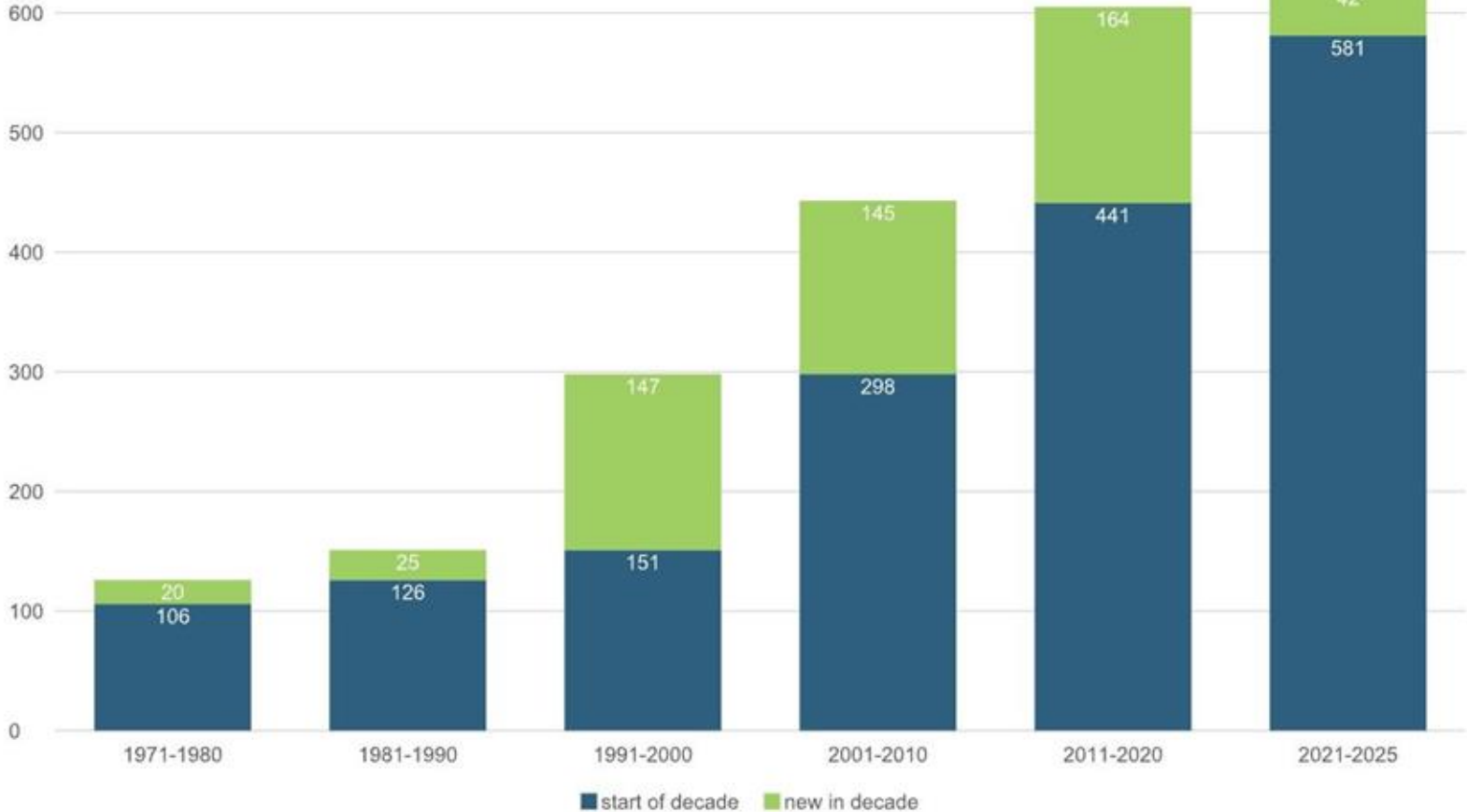
265 District Montessori Programs in the United States



229 Charter Montessori Programs in the United States



Growth of Public Montessori in the United States | 1971-2025



1st Wave | 1910s

2nd Wave | 1960s

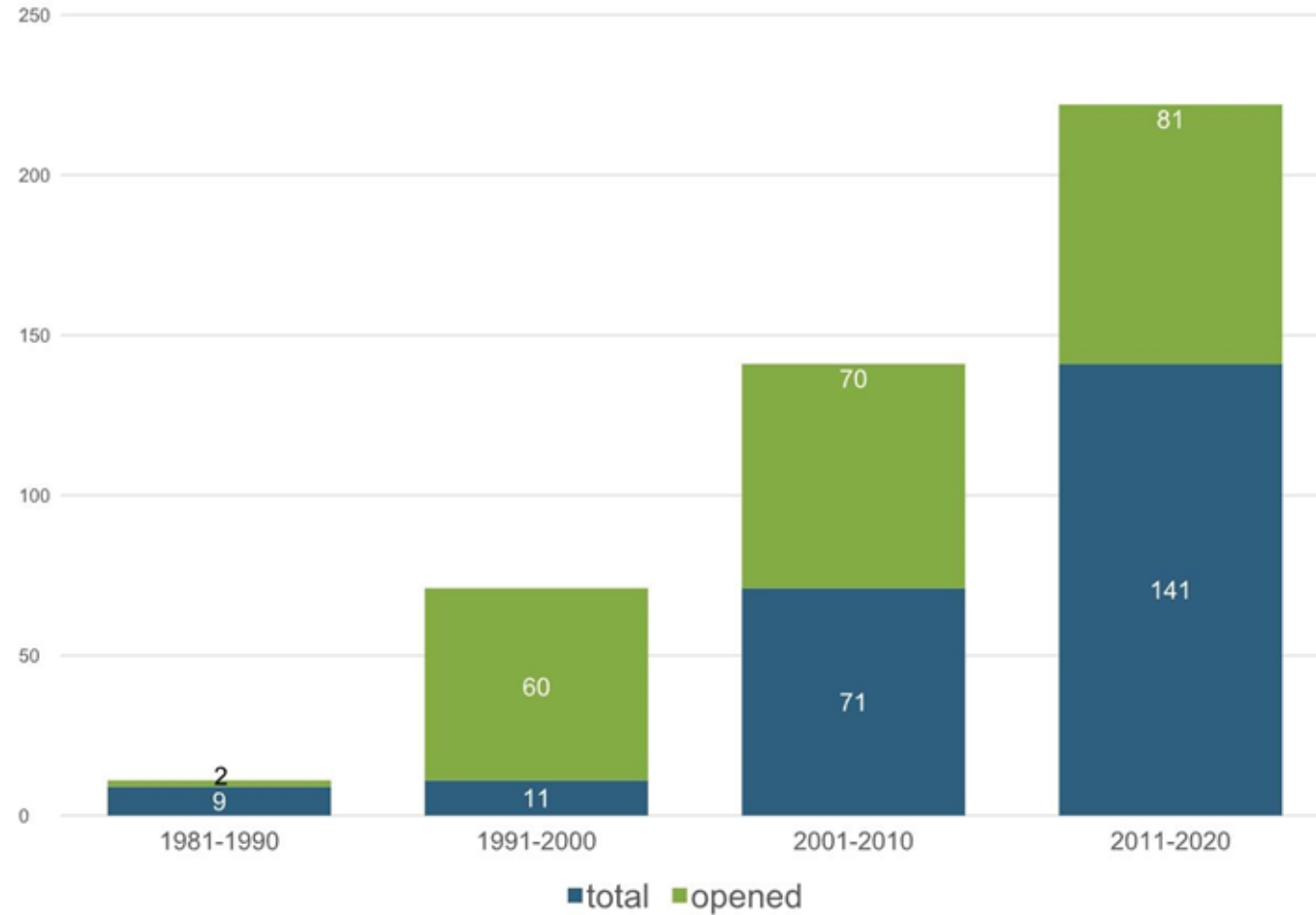
3rd Wave | 1990s +

- Strong in Europe, but initially short-lived in the US

- Mostly concentrated in suburban private settings

- Significant expansion in the public sector

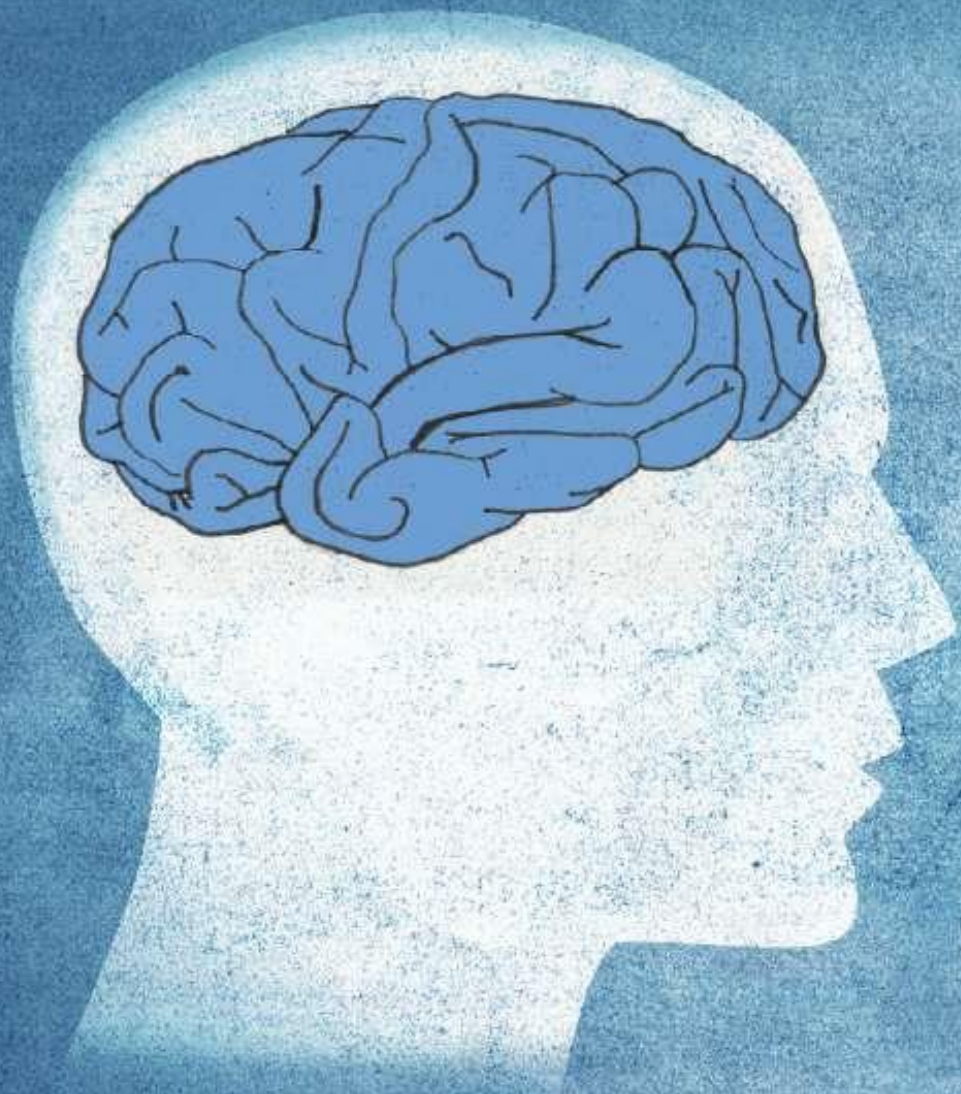
Growth of Charter Montessori in the United States | 1981-2020



Fostering High-quality & Sustainable Public Montessori Programs

- **Access**
 - Necessary tools & resources
- **Autonomy**
 - Opportunity to implement the vision
- **Accountability**
 - Rooted in model-aligned protocols
- **Advisement**
 - Regular coaching & mentoring
- **Accolades**
 - Celebrating the successes





Reflective Practice | The Core of a Professional Culture

Community of Practice

A group of people who share a craft or profession.



Reflective Practice

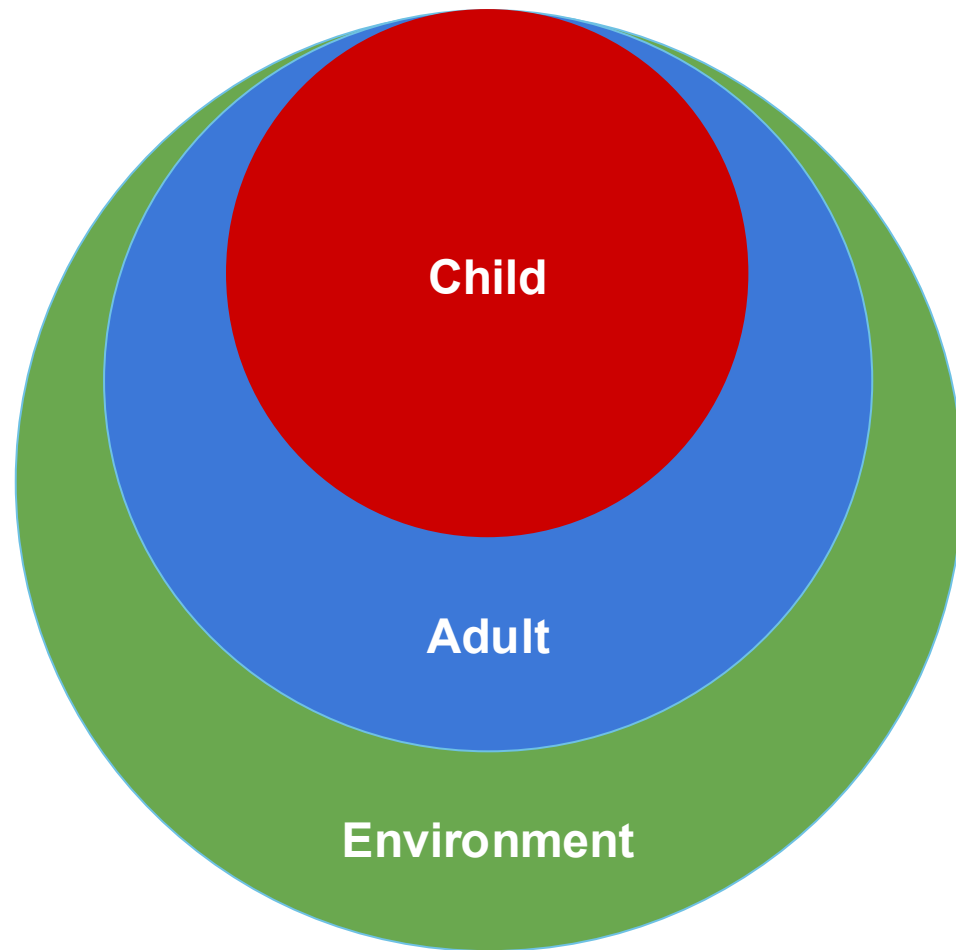
Reflecting during and after an activity in order to engage in continuous learning.



Community of Reflective Practitioners

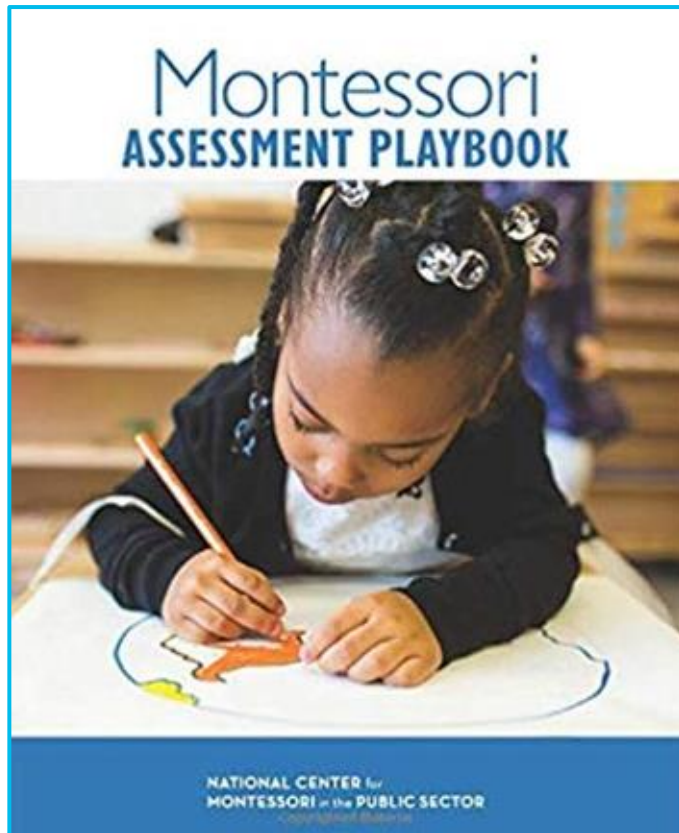
A group of people who share a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

Reflective Practice | The Core of a Professional Culture



- Clarifies Mutual Expectations
- Aligns Actions to Strategic Intentions
- Focuses Energy and Resources
- Celebrates Assets and Identifies Opportunities
- Builds Coherence and Consistency
- Fosters a Culture of Continuous Refinement

Reflective Practice | Montessori Assessment Playbook



- **Strategy Manual & Tools Compendium**
 - Assessment, Accountability, and Human Potential
 - Observation and Data-informed Instruction
 - Assessing Inputs
 - Assessing Outcomes
 - Holding Ourselves Accountable

www.public-montessori.org

Essential Elements for Public Montessori

Fidelity

Adults

- Montessori-trained teachers
- Oriented classroom assistants
- Teachers implement Montessori curriculum and pedagogy
- Schoolwide culture that supports human flourishing

Montessori Learning Environment

- Mixed-age grouping
- Uninterrupted work periods
- Complete set of Montessori materials
- Aligned to human development
- Inclusive and differentiated

Sustainability

Family Partnership

- Authentic and reciprocal
- Clear and frequent communication

Leadership & Organizational Development

- Vision and plan grounded in Montessori
- Ongoing professional development
- Embraces continuous improvement

Assessment

- Purposeful
- Holistic and coordinated
- Rooted in observation and reflection
- Informs future instruction

Essential Elements for Public Montessori

Essential Elements for Public Montessori

Adults

- Teachers have Montessori credentials from an AMS, AMS, or MACTE-accredited training program for the age group they teach.
- Non-Montessori-credentialed teaching team members have preparation appropriate to their roles and play an integrated, collaborative role in the classroom.
- Teachers implement Montessori curriculum and pedagogy.
- Adults embody and foster a school-wide culture supporting human flourishing which respects children, offers independence and responsibility, embraces full identities and diverse lived experiences, and works towards fairness free from bias.

Learning Environment

- Children are grouped according to Montessori age groupings:
 - 2.5 to 6
 - 6 to 9
 - 9 to 12
 - 12 to 15
 - 15 to 18
- Class sizes are large enough to support independence and a wide range of social interaction.
- Classrooms are staffed with teaching teams that support one-on-one interactions with a teacher, while not compromising children's independence.
- Daily schedules provide uninterrupted two- to three-hour classroom work periods.
- Classrooms support a high degree of student choice.
- Classrooms are inviting and free of clutter, with art and décor that represent a diversity of cultures.
- The full complement of Montessori materials is available in every area. Additional materials, when present, embody Montessori principles of order, beauty, simplicity, and purpose, and do not replicate the purposes of Montessori materials.
- Classrooms offer ongoing access to real-world materials and activities.
- Children have access to developmentally appropriate outdoor play environments prepared according to Montessori principles including order, freedom within limits and choice.
- Movement, music, art and/or additional languages are integrated as part of the Montessori curriculum as choices. When programs happen outside of the classroom, they are scheduled to minimize disruption of the work period.
- All children are included in the classroom learning environment. Service providers work in close partnership with classroom teachers to maintain consistency between the Montessori classroom and the support services and settings.
- Multilingual children are included in the Montessori classroom, with knowledgeable and well-supported teachers.

Family Partnership

- The school fosters and sustains authentic family partnerships.
- The school communicates with families clearly, regularly, and frequently.
- Communication supports multiple languages and levels of literacy, and varying access to technology.
- The school communicates, educates, and engages with families about Montessori pedagogy and school/home relationships.
- The school has a community association that represents community demographics, has clear roles and responsibilities, and gives families authentic opportunities to contribute.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MONTESSORI IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR
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- **Focus**
 - Implementation
- **Audience**
 - Authorizers
 - District leadership
 - Building administration
 - School leadership teams
- **Use Cases**
 - Program design
 - Ongoing refinement
 - Strategic prioritization

Standards of Practice

Essential Elements Implementation Rubric

- **Holistic Assessment**
 - Focused reflection
 - Tailored analysis
- **Flexible Format**
 - Self-study
 - NCMPS onsite review
- **Identify Priorities**
 - Design strategically
 - Act tactically

Domain 3— Family Partnership

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY IMPLEMENTATION	STRONG IMPLEMENTATION	PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION	LIMITED IMPLEMENTATION
The school fosters and sustains authentic partnerships that support children and families, build inclusive community, and encourage mutual investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school proactively gathers perspectives of less vocal families, and does not allow a minority of families to have undue influence. • The school has a full-time staff member dedicated to family engagement and partnership. • The school regularly solicits feedback from families on the effectiveness and inclusivity of its partnership work, and acts in partnership with the community on this feedback. • The school proactively seeks to discover and address families' needs (e.g. education, nutrition, housing, wellness, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school regularly gathers and includes families and their perspectives in its support of children's development and education. • The school does not allow a minority of families to have undue influence. • The school, in partnership with families, hosts and supports social gatherings (e.g., school picnics, holiday celebrations, etc) where all families feel authentically represented and included. • The school has a staff member whose primary responsibility is family engagement and partnership. • The school periodically solicits feedback from families on the effectiveness and inclusivity of its partnership work, and acts on this feedback. • The school is responsive to families' needs (e.g. education, nutrition, housing, wellness, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school gathers family perspectives annually and makes some use of them. • The school sometimes allows a minority of families to have undue influence. • Social gatherings are mostly school-planned, exclusive, and/or infrequent or poorly attended. • The school has a staff member with ancillary responsibility for family engagement and partnership. • The school infrequently seeks feedback from families on the effectiveness and inclusivity of its partnership work, and/or makes little use of the information gathered. • The school is somewhat responsive to families' needs (e.g. education, nutrition, housing, wellness, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not consider families' perspectives. • The school allows a minority of families to have undue influence. • Social gatherings are school-planned, exclusive, and/or non-existent. • No particular staff member is responsible for family engagement and partnership. • The school does not seek feedback from families on the effectiveness and inclusivity of its partnership work. • The school does not address families' needs (e.g. education, nutrition, housing, wellness, etc.)
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continued

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MONITORING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR
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An Ecosystem of Model-aligned Tools

Essential Elements for Public Montessori

Adults

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Domain 3— Family Partnership

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continued

Standards of Practice

Program Assessment & Strategic Planning

An Ecosystem of Model-aligned Tools

Essential Elements for Public Montessori

This two-page document gives essential implementation guidelines for fully implemented, sustainable public Montessori programs.

[View/Download »](#)

Essential Elements Implementation Rubric

A fully-articulated rubric for evaluating schools according to the Essential Elements. The Rubric can be used independently, or as part of a contracted Essential Elements Review.

[View/Download »](#)

Foundational Commitments for Public Montessori

The Montessori model differs from other approaches in significant ways. This document summarizes these differences and provide design commitments for a successful and sustainable public Montessori program.

[View/Download »](#)

www.public-montessori.org/tools

Essential Elements Implementation Rubric | Self-study

Elements



Domain 3— Family Partnership

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continued

Essential Elements Implementation Rubric | Self-study

Domain 3— Family Partnership

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continued

Indicators



Essential Elements Implementation Rubric | Self-study

Review



Domain 3— Family Partnership

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY IMPLEMENTATION	STRONG IMPLEMENTATION	PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION	LIMITED IMPLEMENTATION
<p>The school fosters and sustains authentic partnerships that support children and families, build inclusive community, and encourage mutual investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school proactively gathers perspectives of less vocal families, and does not allow a minority of families to have undue influence. The school has a full-time staff member dedicated to family engagement and partnership. The school regularly solicits feedback from families on the effectiveness and inclusivity of its partnership work, and acts in partnership with the community on this feedback. The school proactively seeks to discover and address families' needs (e.g. education, nutrition, housing, wellness, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school regularly gathers and includes families and their perspective in support of children's development and education. The school does not allow a minority of families to have undue influence. The school, in partnership with families, hosts and supports social gatherings (e.g. school picnics, holiday celebrations, etc.) where all families feel authentically represented and included. The school has a staff member whose primary responsibility is family engagement and partnership. The school periodically solicits feedback from families on the effectiveness and inclusivity of its partnership work, and acts on this feedback. The school is responsive to families' needs (e.g. education, nutrition, housing, wellness, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school gathers family perspectives annually and makes some use of them. The school sometimes allows a minority of families to have undue influence. Social gatherings are mostly school-planned, exclusive, and/or infrequent or poorly attended. The school has a staff member with ancillary responsibility for family engagement and partnership. The school infrequently seeks feedback from families on the effectiveness and inclusivity of its partnership work, and/or makes little use of the information gathered. The school is somewhat responsive to families' needs (e.g. education, nutrition, housing, wellness, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not consider families' perspectives. The school allows a minority of families to have undue influence. Social gatherings are school-planned, exclusive, and/or non-existent. No particular staff member is responsible for family engagement and partnership. The school does not seek feedback from families on the effectiveness and inclusivity of its partnership work. The school does not address families' needs (e.g. education, nutrition, housing, wellness, etc.)
<p>The school communicates with families clearly, regularly, and frequently, via multiple channels (e.g., current school website, school newsletter, social media, etc).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school communicates through multiple channels on a regular schedule, and monitors and analyzes its reception. Classroom communications are regular, coordinated, polished, and professional. The Family Handbook is a well-used resource for families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school communicates through multiple channels on a regular schedule. All classrooms offer regular communication (e.g., newsletters, webpages, family folders, etc.). A well-developed Family Handbook, updated annually and distributed at the start of the school year, communicates school mission and culture, procedures, and mutual expectations in clear, accessible language. Communication covers administrative, social, and educational matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school communicates through a single channel on an as-needed basis. Classroom communication takes place irregularly, and/or varies greatly across levels and/or classrooms. There is a Family Handbook that focuses mainly on procedure and improvements could be made in content, clarity, tone, and/or accessibility. Communication focuses primarily on administrative matters, and also addresses some social and educational topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is minimal communication from the school. There is little or no classroom communication. There is no current Family Handbook. Communication is mostly about administrative matters.

continued

Essential Elements Implementation Rubric | Self-study

Domain 3— Family Partnership

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY IMPLEMENTATION	STRONG IMPLEMENTATION	PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION	LIMITED IMPLEMENTATION
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<p>The school communicates with families clearly, regularly, and frequently, via multiple channels (e.g., current school website, school newsletter, social media, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school communicates through multiple channels on a regular schedule, and monitors and analyzes its reception. Classroom communications are regular, coordinated, polished, and professional. The family handbook is a well-used resource for families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school communicates through multiple channels on a regular schedule. All classrooms offer regular communication (e.g., newsletters, webpages, family folders, etc.). A well-developed Family Handbook, updated annually and distributed at the start of the school year, communicates school mission and culture, procedures, and mutual expectations in clear, accessible language. Communication covers administrative, social, and educational matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school communicates through a single channel on an as-needed basis. Classroom communication takes place irregularly, and/or varies greatly across levels and/or classrooms. There is a Family Handbook that focuses mainly on procedure and improvements could be made in content, clarity, tone, and/or accessibility. Communication covers primarily administrative matters, and also addresses some social and educational topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is minimal communication from the school. There is little or no classroom communication. There is no current Family Handbook. Communication is mostly about administrative matters.

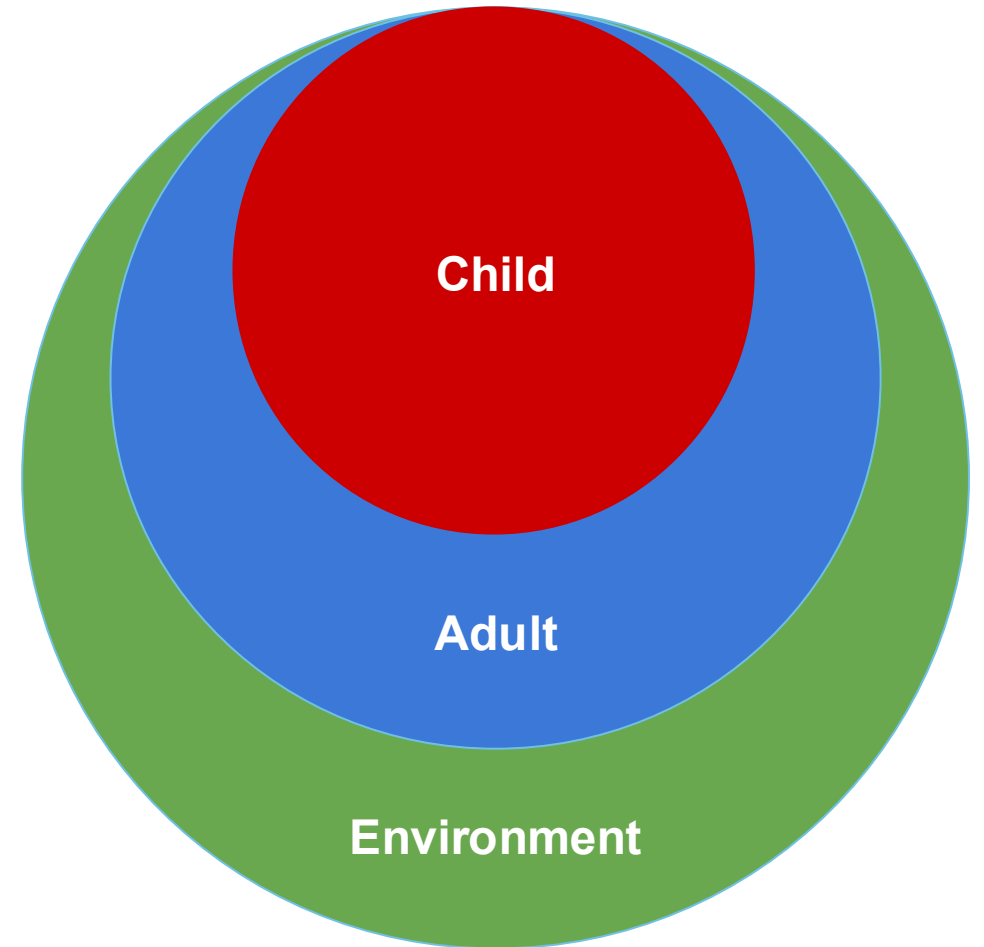
Review



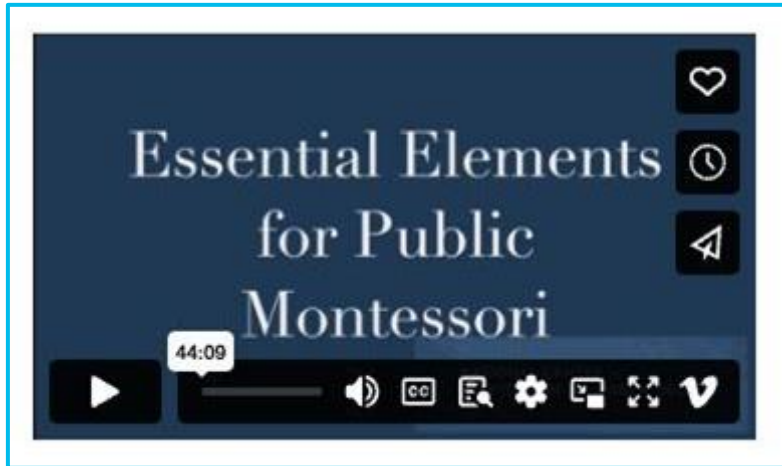
continued

An Ecosystem of Model-aligned Tools | Reflect & Discuss

- **Overall Impressions**
 - What do you notice?
 - What do you wonder?
- **Application Considerations**
 - How might you integrate use of these tools into your work?
 - How do you see these tools relating to daily implementation and strategic planning?
 - What might be some of the benefits of employing these tools? Challenges?



Essential Elements for Public Montessori | Webinars



www.public-montessori.org/research-and-resources

Schoolwide Reflective Practice | Essential Elements Review (EER)

- **Needs Assessment & Orientation**
 - Planning and design
- **Onsite Review**
 - Classroom observations
 - Focus group conversations
 - Preliminary oral report
- **Detailed Annotated Rubric**
- **Comprehensive Written Report**
- **Debrief & Action Planning**
 - Facilitated data review

Domain 3— Family Partnership

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Schoolwide Reflective Practice | Essential Elements Review (EER)

- 2016 - 2026

- 36 EERs / 29 schools
 - 12 charter programs
 - 17 district or magnet programs

- 17 states and DC

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|
| ■ AZ (1) | ■ GA (2) | ■ MN (1) | |
| ■ CA (4)* | ■ ID (1) | ■ NV (2)* | |
| ■ CO (1) | ■ IN (2) | ■ OH (3) | ■ TX (4) |
| ■ DC (3) | ■ MA (4) * | ■ OR (2) | ■ UT (1) |
| ■ DE (1) | ■ MD (1) | ■ PA (1) | ■ WA (1) |



** States with an asterisk have schools that have participated in two Essential Elements Reviews.*

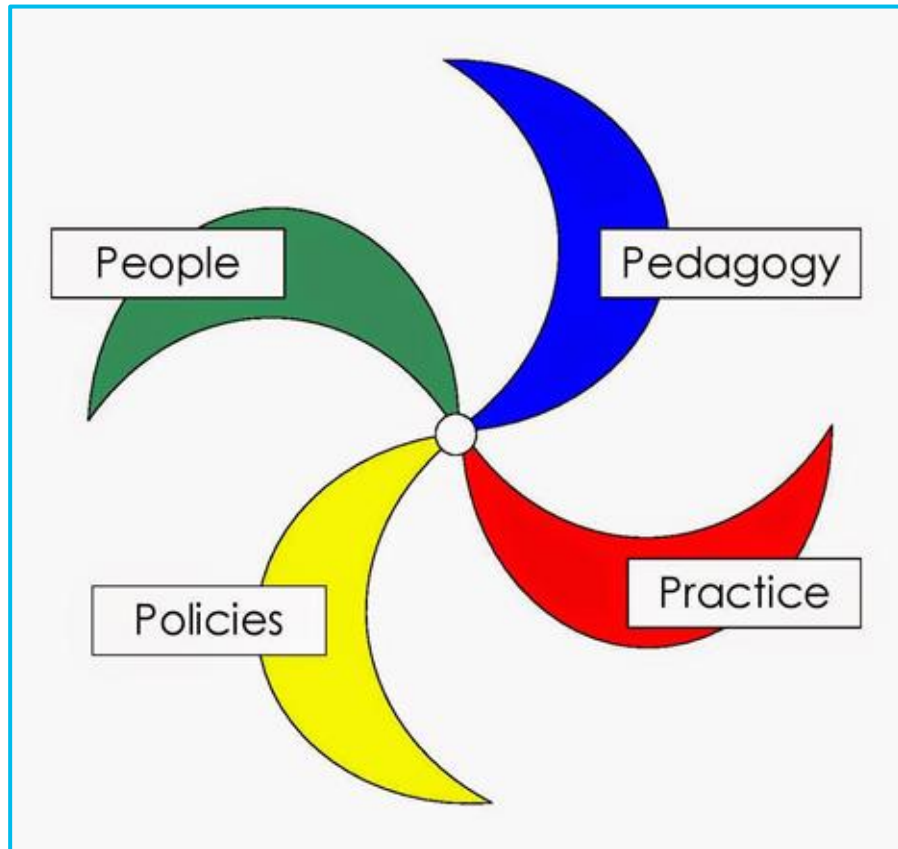
Essential Elements Review (EER) | Recent Testimonials

*“Working with NCMPS to conduct an EER is **the most important thing a Montessori public school leader can do** to help their community celebrate all that is going well, and to focus on next steps for continuous improvement. NCMPS helps hold up a mirror for a community, and their honest feedback helps the school site build motivation to continue the hard work of implementing a high quality public Montessori program.”*

*“Participating in the NCMPS review was **a great experience for our staff**. Our leadership team was able to unpack the feedback in the report with structured guidance throughout the debriefing process from NCMPS staff to ensure that we understood and could make plans for improvement going forward. I would highly recommend this process for public Montessori schools.”*

*“The review process and follow-up has **helped steer our school community** towards higher Montessori indicators within our school performance plan and strategic planning.”*

Characteristics of Strong Public Montessori Programs



- **School-wide Programmatic Vision**
 - Outcomes-aligned values & strategies
- **Ongoing Professional Development**
 - Montessori teacher training
 - Coaching & pedagogical support
- **Consistent Collaboration & Calibration**
 - Horizontal & vertical integration
- **Lesson Design & Delivery**
 - Montessori learning continuum
- **Data-informed Practice**
 - Coherent assessment system



PUBLIC MONTESSORI CONFERENCE + RETREAT

APRIL 17-19
2026

NATIONAL CENTER for
MONTESSORI in the PUBLIC SECTOR



MONTESSORI
NEWS & ADVOCACY



MONTESSORI
SCHOOLS & DATA



MONTESSORI
JOBS & TRAINING

**“
Your
feedback
helps us all
move forward
together**



**Colorado League of
Charter Schools**



Each time you take the survey you can enter to win prizes