

“The best education does not happen at a desk, but rather engaged in everyday living - hands on, exploring in an active relationship with life.”

~ Vince Gowman



TAKING MONTESSORI OUTSIDE



Outdoor Education + Montessori

- ▶ Fostering an appreciation for nature is a cornerstone of Maria Montessori's teachings.
- ▶ She was a strong advocate of integrating nature into the daily learning plan of all students.
- ▶ She believed that “there must be provision for the child to have contact with nature; to understand and appreciate the order, the harmony and the beauty in nature.”
- ▶ To that end, the natural environment must not be treated as a separate entity from the physical classroom. Rather, it should be an extension of Montessori's structured environment.
- ▶ Therefore, we intentionally infuse “outdoor education” at Walden Green so that every child can develop a close, personal relationship with nature.



TAKING MONTESSORI OUTSIDE





TAKING MONTESSORI OUTSIDE



Why Outdoor Education?

- ▶ Students who get to experience an outdoor learning environment tend to be more attentive and, therefore, have a better recollection of the information that was shared.
- ▶ Consistent exposure to nature decreases stress and anxiety, helps elevate mood, and helps with emotion.
- ▶ Children often have too much exposure to digital screens via televisions, computers, and cell phones. This can result in a “nature deficit disorder,” which may lead to obesity and possible psychological and academic issues.
- ▶ Outdoor environments naturally inspire children to be more physically active.
- ▶ Exposure to bright sunlight found in nature is also healthy for vision.
- ▶ Outdoor learning provides children with hands-on experiences in nature. Most children learn better by using their senses. These hands-on experiences cultivate a love of nature and get them interested in our natural resources.

Outdoor Education @ Walden Green Montessori

- ▶ Nature Walks (option: with observations/pictures/notes in Nature Notebook)
- ▶ Gardening (a staff member provides a master “to-do” list for our garden areas)
- ▶ Compost Pile Work (a staff member provides a master “to-do” list for our compost area)
- ▶ Scavenger Hunts (various themes: plants, animals, colors, textures, size, weight, smell)
- ▶ Mini-Sculptures (from dead twigs, dune grass, stems)
- ▶ Digging/excavation (rock identification, sorting/organizing by similarities)
- ▶ Catalog of Trees Project (location on WGM property, type, size/circumference, research attributes/characteristics)
- ▶ Catalog of Flowers Project (location on WGM property, type, size/circumference, research attributes/characteristics)
- ▶ Catalog of Small Plants Project (location on WGM property, type, size/circumference, research attributes/characteristics)
- ▶ Catalog of Mammals Project (location on WGM property, research: attributes/characteristics, diet, lifespan, etc.)
- ▶ Catalog of Birds Project (location on WGM property, research: attributes/characteristics, diet, lifespan, etc.)
- ▶ Catalog of Invertebrates Project (location on WGM property, research: attributes/characteristics, diet, lifespan, etc.)
- ▶ Create a Sun Dial (measure time)
- ▶ Microscope Work: Exploration/Observation (under the supervision of WGM staff)
- ▶ Bird Feeders and Bird Baths
- ▶ Erosion Control Demonstration Area
- ▶ Insect Hotels
- ▶ Survival Skills
- ▶ Outdoor Discovery Center Partnership/Naturalists