



Montessori Córdoba  
International School

## Transition Policy

“We are in the service of development” María Montessori

As a Montessori School we adopt a Montessori approach to the transitions a child experiences in their life at school. These (may) include:

Transitions between planes*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transition from Children’s House to Elementary</li><li>• Transition from Elementary to Adolescence/ High School</li></ul>
Transitions between sub-planes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transition from Nido to Infant Community</li><li>• Transition from Infant Community to Children’s House</li><li>• Transition from Elementary I to Elementary II</li></ul>
Other transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transition from traditional school to Montessori program</li><li>• Transition from Montessori program to traditional school</li></ul>

\*Appendix 1: Planes of development

The basis of Montessori Philosophy is natural human development and human tendencies therefore our transition approach must support this.

My vision of the future is no longer people taking exams and proceeding then onto that certification... but of individuals passing from one stage of independence to a higher one, by means of their own activity through their own effort of will, which constitutes the inner evolution of the individual. (María Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence)

### Transitions between planes

#### The Natural Approach

The ideal environment for a natural approach to transitions was described by Montessori as a school with doors separating each environment which could be used by the children to naturally explore the next environment when they feel the curiosity, citing that often the first stage will simply be positioning

themselves by the (safety of the) door to observe the work in the next plane. The characteristics of the first plane needs and characteristics gradually fade and the second plane characteristics and needs become more pronounced. The child will gradually spend more and more time exploring the next environment until, one day, they do not leave it. Then, the guides change the child's name from one class attendance register to another.

As a Montessori School we are working towards this model although we do have some logistical barriers to implementing this approach. We must therefore determine another way to determine readiness.

#### Is a child ready to transition from Children's House to Elementary?

Here we will focus on the transition from first to second plane as it is the most important transition in our current school setting.

It seems most clear to start with how a transition should not be determined:

- When a child reaches a particular age (e.g. sixth birthday)
- An arbitrary date chosen by adults (On the 5<sup>th</sup> of Sept all 6-year olds transition from one to the next class)

Neither of these transitions is linked to the developmental needs of the child.

- A child's attainment of particular academic milestones (green series/number facts etc.)

Some children (and adults) would still be in Children's House (Elementary or High School), instead of thriving in areas of study/work that they love, if we only consider that people are ready to move forward when they have acquired a particular set of academic skills. We will stress the importance of social and emotional preparation, independence and maturity rather than the traditional view of 'school readiness.'

It is true that we cannot make a genius. We can only give to each child the chance to fulfill his potential. Maria Montessori

Remember that our very own Maria Montessori did not do well academically at school as a child. Guides must always focus on developing independence, as the key to developing success and self-esteem:

Changing role of the adult in Montessori planes:

- 1<sup>st</sup> plane: Help me to do it by myself
- 2<sup>nd</sup> plane: Help me to think by myself
- 3<sup>rd</sup> plane: Help us to do it by ourselves

#### Identifying a child who is ready for transition between Children's House and Elementary

The deciding factor is: **The child's manifestation of characteristics that are typical of the plane they are going to enter**

These include:

- The child is drawn to working with others. (*Instincto gregario*)
- The child is excited by large projects. (*Great work*)
- The child is less willing to bid fond, prolonged farewells to a parent, and expresses a preference for making his/her own way to class. (*Separation from family*)
- The child becomes louder and more energetic. (*Physical stamina*) This characteristic can stand out (as difficult) in a Children's House community.

- There is a focus on issues of right and wrong. (*Moral development*)
- The child asks “How?” and “Why” questions.

Remember that first plane characteristics will also be present, but once this begins to happen the child should be considered for transition to Elementary.

#### Common concerns

##### *Children entering Elementary without literacy/numeracy skills*

This is dealt with in the same way as any child entering the class: Guides ascertain the skill and knowledge level of each child, and proceeds to help that child advance. That is what teachers do. We do not measure child/guide or school success on adult generated academic milestones, we measure success as; forward development, including positive support during periods of regression/deviation, learning for its own sake, developing knowledge and awareness of the world and a love of learning.

##### *Children entering Elementary in the middle of the year*

The spiral curriculum allows children to start at any time during the school year: they will revisit the great lessons, concepts and presentations again in the future. Children in Elementary should not be thought of as first/second/third... graders: Elementary can be a five, six or seven-year period.

We are developing our programme for **transition from Elementary to Adolescence/High School**

#### Is a child ready to transition from Infant Community to Children’s House?

The right moment for transition from the Infant Community to Children’s House is equally as important, however due to the school’s current administrative and geographic set-up we cannot consider transitions that are not in September. When our school’s merge this should cease to be a barrier.

During many years, since the introduction of the Assistants to Infancy course in Montessori practice the first sub plane was defined as 0-3 and the second 3-6. However, this change was identified as causing problems and has recently been updated by the AMI scientific pedagogy group who have changed the Children’s House diploma to 2.5-6+ age range. It should therefore be accepted for children to transition as young as 2.5 years.

#### Identifying a child who is ready for transition between Infant Community to Children’s House?

- The child demonstrates a heightened social awareness of other children.
- We observe concentrated cycles of activity, especially in practical life and language materials.
- The child’s level of spoken language has advanced and the child frequently engages in conversation with friends.
- There is repetition in the independent use of nomenclature cards.
- The child demonstrates a higher level of independence (and less mess) during lunch/snack.
- Toileting does not need to be 100% independent but should be on its way to mastery.\*

\*We cannot ask a child to put their intellectual development on hold until they choose to use the toilet independently. Some situations of later toilet independence are physiological, some psychological (often the crisis of self-affirmation/"no!") and others are due to an adult missing a sensitive period.

#### Organising transition from Infant Community to Children's House

When a child is considered as ready for the transition the Children's House Guide is invited to a half hour observation of the child in the Infant Community.