MONTESSORI NOW

A State Montessori Validation Project

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is a State Montessori Validation Project?**
   The State Montessori Validation Project is a model, or template, for setting baseline standards for the state Montessori community to establish an accountability system, through a state recognized Montessori Validation Organization. This validation assures the consumer, state agencies, and Montessori schools that a minimal level of quality has been met.

2. **What is the purpose and intention of the Validation Project?**
   The state Montessori Validation Project is meant as a template for use by state Montessori communities wishing to implement a validation system for the schools in their state. The goal is to provide a baseline measure for all participating Montessori programs in the state that will provide an agreed upon "definition" enabling consumers and state agencies to better understand, and trust, that those validated Montessori schools meet a certain level of safety and quality.

3. **What are the baseline standards?**
   The "standards" are those key components that, at a minimum, the state Montessori community believe a school should have in place to be recognized as a Montessori program. These are baseline components which do not define "best practice" but rather provide a measure of quality assurance to state agencies and families.

4. **Who sets the standards for all Montessori schools and programs?**
   These "standards" are determined by the state Montessori community itself. Each state has its own independently implemented systems of accountability. Therefore, the baseline components agreed upon by the state agency and the Montessori community may vary in some ways from state to state.
   As a template for key components, Montessori educators in the state community should refer to the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori and their Montessori teacher preparation program. There are key components which are foundational to the implementation of the Montessori philosophy, pedagogy, and curriculum.

5. **What are the benefits of the state Montessori Validation Project?**
   For Montessori schools: A state validation project will give meaning to the use of the name Montessori. Giving a level of self-regulated accountability to state agencies and consumers can be a powerful advocacy tool in efforts to modify licensing rules and

regulations, QRIS, recognition of the Montessori teacher credential, and curriculum, and assessment variances.

For State Agencies: A state validation project enables state agencies to have a measure to judge safety and quality through the assurance that a school calling itself Montessori has met a minimum set of standards established by their peers. This creates a greater trust and willingness to negotiate variances for validated Montessori programs.

For Consumers: Families who have chosen a Montessori program for their children should be confident that they are, in fact, receiving a Montessori education with key components in place.

6. **What programs can participate in a state Montessori Validation Project?**
   Each state Montessori community decides which schools will be included but the project can be implemented at all levels of Montessori education and in both private and public programs.

7. **What if a school program does not meet or comply with the baseline components?**
   A school that does not yet meet the baseline standards would not become a validated school. However, at the choice of the state Montessori community, those schools could engage in a quality improvement plan that could be monitored and mentored by the Montessori Validation organization to then become validated when they have achieved the standards.

8. **How does a state Montessori Validation Project differ from national Montessori organization accreditation or recognition?**
   The Validation Project is a state based program of accountability that is specific to the needs of the state Montessori community. Its intention is to provide threshold standards or key components for the Montessori schools in the state so as to provide consumer protection and increased state agency understanding with the goal of advocating for regulation and accountability that supports and protects Montessori education.

   A Validation Project in no way replaces or competes with accreditation by national Montessori organizations. Accreditation is a process of "best practice" as determined by each organization and certifies that a Montessori school meets exemplary standards that place a school at the highest level of achievement and quality.

9. **How does the state Montessori community create a Validation Project?**
   A good starting place is to form a Validation Committee. It will be the work of this committee to communicate with the greater state Montessori community to establish consensus on threshold components, to negotiate with state agencies, and to build a Validation Organization of volunteers.

10. **What about liability issues? Will our state Montessori community become "responsible" for Montessori schools and programs in our state?**
The state community is state recognized as a Validation Organization for assuring that validated schools have key components in place. These key components do not replace state regulations or licensing requirements of Montessori schools. Therefore, the state agency retains liability.

11. **How does our state Montessori community advocate for modifications or changes in state regulations?**
With a state approved Validation Organization comes a level of trust and accountability that the state can rely on for negotiating modifications in the regulations. During the process of approval of your Validation Organization you can ask for changes based on the additional level of self-regulation.

12. **What are the costs of a Validation Project? How can a state Montessori community manage a Validation Organization and how is it sustainable?**
A state Montessori community decides on any cost to a participating school but charging a nominal fee can be a good source of revenue for your group. To manage a Validation Organization requires volunteers to engage in several different tasks. See the Validation Project Positions document for specifics.