**Kindergarten Year in a Primary Montessori Classroom**

With School Choice pressures and a desire to enter the elementary school framework, many parents have questions about the benefits of staying in a Montessori program for the kindergarten year. While Montessori children generally do very well in any educational setting no matter when they transition, the third year of a Montessori Primary program provides a particularly special experience that cannot be replicated elsewhere. The Montessori philosophy is designed to build upon itself, and children in a Montessori program begin laying the groundwork for ever more challenging and abstract work as early as infancy. The third year of Primary is the time in which the child is able to capitalize on all their previous learning and their true knowledge begins to form. Leaving the Primary program without the opportunity to consolidate their experiences is similar to doing all the prep work for a gourmet meal without actually cooking it; the child has spent two years in primary laying the groundwork for that deep understanding that can only come from completing the cycle of Montessori materials.

The following excerpt from LePort Montessori’s article, The Hidden Benefits of Your Child’s Third Year in Montessori Preschool, sums it up best:

*The third year in Montessori preschool has sometimes been called the cashing in year or the leap year.  It’s the time when students put together all the different skills they have indirectly and directly prepared for throughout their Montessori toddler and preschool years.*

*Academically, the third year is often a flurry of activity. If you are the parent of a 3rd year student, you may already have noticed some of the interesting new work your child brings home: booklets of math facts practice; Books to Remember books to read to you; sentences cut into little pieces for analysis, and map shapes traced and labeled.*

*Students also tackle progressively longer tasks: they might spend multiple days creating booklets of different leaf shapes carefully colored and labeled; they might illustrate and author multi-sentence stories, or complete math problems using more abstract materials such as the Small Bead Frame.*

*In the third year of Primary, a typical Montessori preschool student achieves cognitive growth far above grade level.*[*He goes from walking to leaping, as a Montessori mother put it.*](http://montessorimadmen.com/blog/2012/4/25/from-creeping-to-leaping-the-kindergarten-yeara-montessori-p.html)*And yet, as impressive as this academic achievement is, the most important benefits of the third year in Montessori preschool may well lie elsewhere.*

*Over the past decade, researchers have come to question the role that cognitive skills by themselves play in a child’s success in school and life. While academics matter greatly,*[*some researchers now say that*](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443819404577635352783638934.html) *what matters most in a child’s development … is not how much information we can stuff into her brain in the first few years of life. What matters, instead, is whether we are able to help her develop a very different set of qualities, a list that includes persistence, self-control, curiosity, conscientiousness, grit and self-confidence. Economists refer to these as noncognitive skills, psychologists call them personality traits, and the rest of us often think of them as character (Wall Street Journal).*

*The third year in Montessori preschool is a time when children mature in their personality traits or character.  It’s the time when students become self-possessed learners, confident in their abilities.  It’s where they emerge as leaders, benevolently sharing their skills with their younger peers.*

Excerpted from: <https://www.leportschools.com/blog/the-hidden-benefits-of-your-childs-third-year-in-montessori-primary/>