



## Grammar: Montessori Style

*Is my child taught to read using phonetics, whole language or a combination? What are the normal steps my child learns in order to master more complex words?*

Your child learns phonetics through his/her work with object boxes and alphabet manipulatives, as well as phonetic and phonogram labeling and commands. These well-designed materials, with guidance from the Montessori teacher, allow your child to discover on his/her own the rules of our language. For instance, your child will use sandpaper and moveable alphabet letters in which the vowels are color-coded differently from the consonants. Although the primary child has not received a specific lesson on vowels, through this work he/she discovers that each word contains at least one blue letter. When your child begins writing and reading, he/she will start with simple words containing short vowel sounds. He will progress to words with long vowel sounds and phonograms such as "ch" and "ea". Even though your child may not know the terminology (i.e. blends, short vowel, etc.) he/she will be able to categorize words by their common sounds.

*What manipulatives are used to teach grammar at the extended day level?*

As your child becomes more proficient at reading and writing, he/she will be introduced to the "Function of the Words exercises. These exercises help your child learn about the function of nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. A miniature farm is utilized as a basis to learn the parts of speech, since it provides a wealth of subject matter in an area most children enjoy. Geometric shapes are also used. Your child will begin with naming words and proceed to action words, words which describe the naming word, etc. The terminology of noun, verb and adjective are not used. At first he/she will use words provided in the "Function of the Word Box" and soon progress to writing his own words and phrases. You may begin to see colored symbols above the words your child writes. These symbols are used instead of diagramming to learn sentence analysis. As your child enters the elementary level, he/she will use grammar boxes which will aid your child's learning of complex sentence analysis.



*How is proper spelling/grammar reinforced?*

When your child begins to write, he/she will be using phonetic spelling. At this point, the spelling is not corrected. The important function initially is the expression of an idea. Your child will be absorbed in the excitement of writing. At this stage, emphasis on spelling might squelch his enthusiasm to write. This stage certainly poses a challenge for parents and teachers when trying to read a story written phonetically with little or no space between the words! As your child becomes more proficient at reading and realizes the value of written language, he/she becomes more interested in spelling words properly to enable others read his/her work more readily. Your child will begin using a dictionary. In the elementary classroom your child will be expected to spell words correctly. He/she will keep a small notebook which will become his/her personal dictionary of words he/she frequently uses when writing compositions. Your child will be given weekly spelling lists and tests. The elementary teacher will point out misspelled words as well as grammatical errors in his/her work. Your child will need to correct these errors to have the work considered complete. In the process, your child will become quite good at using a dictionary.

