

Interdependence

There are two main goals of a Montessori education – for the individual to achieve levels of independence throughout development and to experience and contribute to the interdependence of humanity.

We all want to make choices for ourselves, exercise our liberty, and be responsible for our own lives. At the same time, we also want to be part of something. We are designed to be both independent and be in community. These two needs are not mutually exclusive, but in fact, operate in relationship to each other. We have an innate desire to be autonomous (independent) and to belong (interdependent).

When we develop the ability to act for ourselves, make choices, control ourselves, and accept responsibility, we are able to be functioning, contributing members of society.

In the first plane of development, children work for their own development and work towards functional independence.

In the second plane of development, the group is bonded by work and the desire to associate with others.

In adolescence though, young adults are ready to work toward being socially and economically independent. They want to figure out their place in society, grapple with real problems, and contribute in a useful way. Thus, Montessori adolescent programs offer teens the chance to develop and feel secure in their own abilities while also collaborating in real and meaningful social endeavours. In the process of running a small business, for example, adolescents are applying their intellectual skills from marketing to mathematics, while also navigating how to communicate with customers and collaborate with classmates.

Application of the Planes of Development in the Third Plane:

The third plane of development is where interdependence is experienced, lived and developed. Independence is a step, but interdependence is the ultimate goal for human beings.