

Commonly Asked Questions

Is Multi-Age just split grades? How are two grade levels taught at once?

At Montrose School, we are deliberate about our Multi-Age groupings and choose to group children this way because it makes good educational sense. Diversity is valued and we believe that children with different experiences, ages and abilities learn together. Curriculum is integrated and shared by both grade levels and highlights real life experiences as well as allows for student voice.

'Split' or 'combined' grade classrooms are most often organized for administrative convenience or economic reasons (i.e. there are too many grade 2's for one class, so a split or combined grade 2/3 is established). Not always, but often such classrooms are organized as two distinct grades sharing a teacher and a classroom space, where the teacher plans for and teaches to both grade groups as separate entities.

What benefits are there for the older children in a Multi-Age classroom?

Older children in a Multi-Age group often take on the role of mentors as they respond to the needs of their younger classmates. This provides an opportunity for them to develop their leadership skills and in turn enhances their confidence and self-esteem. In addition, cognitive skills are improved as the mentors consolidate their own learning by sharing their thoughts with younger children. The Students' sense of responsibility and confidence grows in their second year.

Will children in a Multi-Age group function at a level comparable to children in a regular graded classroom?

Students will leave Montrose academically sound. The curriculum is the same as for a regular classroom, but there is some rotation of curriculum content in areas of Social Studies and Science. In our opinion, this enhances curricular integration and curriculum is woven into a meaningful, relevant study. This allows for a more in-depth look at topics and a deeper level of understanding than when subjects are taught in isolation in a half hour slot per day. The research suggests that Multi-Age groupings are associated with a positive self-concept and an enhanced attitude towards learning. Our teachers work within curricular guidelines where the learning needs of individual students are identified and addressed, adequate resources are available, and students' learning processes and products meet criteria for quality work.



Montrose School strives to foster a stimulating and challenging Multi-Age environment where students, teachers, and parents work together to create optimal academic, social and emotional growth that will motivate students to life-long learning and achievement in our ever-changing world.

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Multi-Age at Montrose School



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION
INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Multi-Age at Montrose School

Montrose School is a Multi-Age School. This grouping is highly intentional and is driven by our *educational philosophy*, not for administrative or economic reasons. In order to develop a deep understanding of each child's strengths and needs, and to plan instruction at the student's level of development, time is needed. The two years each child spends in a Multi-Age classroom allows teachers to gain an understanding of each child's unique personality, interests and learning styles.

Learner-centred

Our classroom communities at Montrose School provide opportunities for learning that is inquiry-based, connected and purposeful, allows for choice and for making connections with the world in which our students live. Instruction, learning opportunities and movement within the curriculum encompasses individual needs, interests and abilities. We are deliberate about encouraging student voice, collaboration and in connecting our learning to the larger community.



Community of learners

Relationships are key to developing a kind and caring community of learners. At Montrose School, relationships are nurtured because of the Multi-Age setting where children stay with the same teacher for two years. It provides students with stability, allows for easy transition and diminishes the anxiety associated with moving to a new classroom at the beginning of the year. Teachers know their children well. There is a family feel to our classrooms and an absence of competition between students at different

places in their learning. Children appreciate and respect individual differences. Children are gathered like adults in the real world, and have opportunities to meet with a wide range of people who share common needs and interests.

Parental involvement

Involving parents at Montrose School is a major commitment that we make to enhance our Multi-Age program. Being partners in the education of your children means that parents are involved in their children's education at a variety of levels. Parents may accompany classrooms on field trips, support classroom studies in creative and meaningful ways or help prepare materials for teaching. We believe your child's education and the learning atmosphere are enriched through your participation.

Thoughts from our parents

"Developmentally, Multi-Age classrooms make sense. Children can explore learning at their own rate – there is not a pre-conceived notion of where everyone has to be at one time. All children are celebrated for who they are as individuals – whether they are gifted or needing assistance."

"Our teachers trust our children as learners. Parental involvement is also an integral part of the process at Montrose School."

"Two years in the same class provides a safe environment where more risk-taking is possible. The structure helps defeat bullying as kids take care of each other. Children don't feel judged and can build on their successes and learn at their own rate. Montrose is not clique-ish or competitive in nature. In fact, the children at Montrose are learning how to accept and value all children's contributions and how to deal with varying abilities and personalities within a classroom setting."

"Our child's relationship with their teachers for two years is so important. The teacher can build on their successes, risks are taken and children can be brought further along because teachers know them well as learners. The child and family are comfortable from the very beginning in their second year – there is not much of a transition."



Thoughts from our students

"Younger students are able to look ahead and try new things. It helps us to see where our learning is going as we watch our teacher work with older kids. The older kids share their expertise with us and help us to get to know our teacher better. We feel comfortable asking them for help instead of always asking a teacher."

"All kids are experts here. We have opportunities to teach and learn from younger and older students. We sit together at mixed grade table groups and share our knowledge. We are also able to take on leadership roles across the school as we plan and organize special events and activities."

"Multi-Age benefits both grades. You get to be both an older and a younger student in the same classroom over two years. We get to work at different levels. We are learning about the same topics and themes but there may be different work or expectations. There are many ways to learn here. We support each other."

"It is great to make friends with kids that are younger and older. It is easy to make new friends because there are many chances to work and play with kids across the school. At recess time, we know lots of kids from other classes to play with."

"In our class, we know it is okay to ask questions and it is okay to ask for help. Our teachers are awesome and make our work fun. We learn from each other. Everybody is a part of one big community."