

## **Beware of Monte-Something**

Because Dr. Maria Montessori never trademarked her name nor claimed any franchises or patents for her methodology, there are no restrictions on who uses them. The result is that there are many Montessori schools out there falsely claiming to be the real thing. Some schools' teachings may only include particular elements of Dr. Montessori's methods and philosophy.

Often one sign of a school's commitment to professional excellence is its membership in one of the following Montessori societies, such as the American Montessori Society (AMS), Association Montessori International (AMI), or the newly organized International Montessori Council. Of the approximately 8,000 Montessori schools in the U.S. only 1,100 are members of the AMS. AMS holds its members accountable to the Society's code of Ethics and Montessori principles for which the AMS stands.

You as a consumer must do your research. Find out if a school is affiliated with a Montessori society. Ask what kind of training the teachers have. Visit the school, observe the classrooms in action, and ask the director to explain the theory behind the activities you see. In determining which school is best for your child, you have to trust your eyes, ears, and gut instincts. Nothing beats personal observation and connection.