



# MEDIA BRIEFING

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## Timeline of Dr Maria Montessori's Life

by Romana Schneider and Gerard Leonard  
courtesy of the North American Montessori Teachers' Association (NAMTA)

### 1870

Maria Montessori born on August 31 in Chiaravalle, Ancona province, Italy.  
Attends a boys' school in Rome, with a science/engineering emphasis.

### 1890

Against opposition from her father, she pursues her wish to become a doctor.

### 1896

Becomes the first woman to obtain a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Rome.  
Represents Italy at the International Women's Congress in Berlin; delivers address on rights of working women, including equal pay for equal work.  
Studies the writings of French doctors Itard and Séguin, who worked with disabled children.

### 1897-98

Audits courses in pedagogy at the University of Rome; reads all major works in educational philosophy over the past 200 years.

### 1899

Attends women's congress in London; received by Queen Victoria.

### 1899-1906

Lectureship in hygiene and anthropology at the teacher training college for women in Rome.

### 1900

Works at the psychiatric clinic in Rome.  
Appointed director of the Orthophrenic School, a model school for training teachers of children with developmental disabilities. For two years, she experiments at the model school with materials to stimulate the senses. She succeeds in fostering the development of some of the children to such an extent that they achieve the same results on state exams as typically developing schoolchildren.

### 1901

Begins a second degree—in education, experimental psychology, and anthropology—at the University of Rome. Visits elementary schools to do anthropological research.

### 1904-08

Lectures in anthropology and biology at the University of Rome's school of education, incorporating her clinical observations of pupils in Rome's elementary schools. These lectures become the basis of her book *Pedagogical Anthropology* (1910).

**1907**

First Children's House (*Casa dei Bambini*) is opened at 53 Via dei Marsi in the San Lorenzo district of Rome on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6.

**1908**

The Children's House on Via Solari in Milan, run by Anna Maria Maccheroni, is opened.

**1909**

Gives the first training course in her method to about 100 students in Rome. There, she writes, in the space of a month, her first book, *Il Metodo della Pedagogia Scientifica applicato all'educazione infantile nelle Case dei Bambini*. In the years to follow, this book is translated into over 20 languages. The English edition is titled *The Montessori Method*.

**1910**

Two parallel teacher training courses are held in the Franciscan convent on Via Giusti in Rome, where there is a model Children's House.

Second book: *L'Antropologia pedagogica (Pedagogical Anthropology)*.

**1911**

Resigns her teaching post at the University of Rome and gives up her private medical practice to concentrate entirely on education.

The Montessori method is already being put into practice in English and Argentinean schools and is beginning to be introduced into Italian and Swiss primary schools.

Model schools set up in Paris, New York, and Boston.

**1912**

The English version of *Il Metodo* appears in the U.S. in an edition of 5,000 copies under the title *The Montessori Method*. Within a few days, it is sold out. It reaches second place on the year's list of nonfiction bestsellers.

**1913**

Runs the First International Training Course in her apartment in Rome, under the patronage of Queen Margherita. Students come from Italy and other European countries, Australia, South Africa, India, China, the Philippines, the United States, and Canada.

Montessori Educational Association founded in the United States. Its membership includes Alexander Graham Bell, his wife, Mabel Bell, S.S. McClure, and President Wilson's daughter, Margaret Woodrow Wilson.

First trip to the United States.

**1914**

Second International Training Course in Rome.

Montessori's third book, *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*, is published in New York.

**1915**

Second trip to the United States, accompanied by her son, Mario. Addresses International Kindergarten Union and National Educational Association (NEA), and runs a training course, the Third International Course.

At the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, a Montessori class works in a glass pavilion observed by visitors.

Dr. Montessori's NEA lectures are published in New York: *My System of Education*, *The Organization of Intellectual Work in School*, *Education in Relation to the Imagination of the Little Child*, and *The Mother and the Child*.

**1916**

Moves to Barcelona at the invitation of the city government; Barcelona remains her home until the coup in 1936 that brings General Franco to power.

Fourth International Training Course in Barcelona.

Model Montessori school and a children's chapel are set up in Barcelona, as well as a teacher training institute, with the backing of the Catalan government.  
Her fourth book appears, *L'autoeducazione nelle Scuole Elementari* (English title: *The Advanced Montessori Method*).

#### **1919**

Training course in London using the format that would become standard: fifty hours of lectures, fifty hours of teaching using the materials, fifty hours of observation of Montessori classes.

#### **1920**

Lectures at Amsterdam University: for the first time, Maria Montessori outlines her ideas on secondary school education.

#### **1921**

Training courses in London and Milan.

Founding of the New Education Fellowship (today known as the World Education Fellowship), of which Maria Montessori is an active member, engaging in heated debate with the leading educational reformers of the time.

#### **1922**

Publication of *I bambini viventi nella Chiesa* in Naples (English edition *The Child in the Church*, London 1929), Maria Montessori's first book on the Catholic liturgy from the child's point of view.  
First Children's House in Vienna set up by Lili Roubiczek.

#### **1923**

Training courses in London and the Netherlands.

Montessori's first visit to the *Haus der Kinder* in Vienna; start of her collaboration and friendship with Lili Roubiczek (Peller), Lisl Herbatschek (Braun), and others.

#### **1924**

Four-month training course in Amsterdam.

Meeting of Montessori with Benito Mussolini (who had come to power in 1922) results in official recognition and widespread establishment of Montessori schools by the Italian government.

#### **1925**

Training course in London. Dr. Montessori's son, Mario, takes this course and receives his Montessori Diploma.

#### **1926**

Visits Argentina.

Speaks on "Education and Peace" at the League of Nations in Geneva.

#### **1927**

Presented at the English court.

Visits schools in Ireland for the first time.

#### **1928**

The book *Das Kind in der Familie*, based on lectures she gave in 1923 in Vienna, is published in German. (It will be issued in English as *The Child in the Family* in 1936.)

#### **1929**

A Montessori teacher training center with a model Montessori school has been built in Rome; collaboration between Maria Montessori and the architects.

First International Montessori Congress in Helsingør, Denmark.

In conjunction with her son, Mario, founds the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), with headquarters in Berlin (until 1935; after that in Amsterdam).

**1930**

International Training Course in Rome.

Lectures in Vienna, during which she becomes acquainted with Anna Freud (founder of child psychoanalysis and daughter of Sigmund Freud).

**1931**

International Training Courses in Rome and England.

Lectures at Berlin University.

Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement, visits Montessori schools in Rome.

**1932**

Second International Montessori Congress in Nice, France. Montessori delivers lecture *Peace and Education*, published by the International Bureau of Education, Geneva.

Publications: *La Vita in Cristo* (Rome), *Ideas Generales Sobre Mi Método* (Madrid), *The Mass Explained to Children* (London).

**1933**

The Nazis systematically destroy the Montessori movement in Germany, closing all Montessori schools.

Third International Montessori Congress in Amsterdam.

Training courses in London, Dublin, and Barcelona.

**1934**

Fourth International Montessori Congress in Rome.

After conflicts with the fascist system, all Montessori schools in Italy “cease to exist ... in a single day” (Rita Kramer).

*Psico-Aritmética* and *Psico-Geometría* published in Barcelona.

**1936**

Fifth International Montessori Congress in Oxford, England; development of further principles of Montessori education for Elementary (Cosmic Education) and for secondary schools.

General Franco's coup; Maria Montessori flees Barcelona for England and then Amsterdam. The Netherlands becomes her home; a training center with model school is set up in Laren, near Amsterdam (materials on Cosmic Education are used for the first time), and AMI moves its headquarters there. At this time there are over 200 Montessori schools in the Netherlands.

Publications: *The Secret of Childhood* (London), *Les Etapes de L'Education* (Bruges, Belgium).

**1937**

Sixth International Montessori Congress in Copenhagen; the theme is “Educate for Peace.”

Montessori delivers several lectures later collected in *Education and Peace* (first published in Italy as *Educazione e Pace*, 1949).

**1938**

Seventh International Montessori Congress in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Speech at the Sorbonne in Paris in which she makes one of her numerous appeals for peace.

**1939**

*God En het Kind* (“God and the Child”) and *The ‘Erdkinder’ and the Functions of the University: The Reform of Education During and After Adolescence* published in the Netherlands.

Departs for India with Mario to run what was to be a three-month training course at the invitation of the Theosophical Society, which has been using the Montessori method to successfully combat illiteracy.

**1940**

Italy enters World War II on the side of the Germans. In June, Mario Montessori interned by the British colonial government in India as an enemy alien, and Maria Montessori confined to the

compound of the Theosophical Society. Mario is released in August out of the Viceroy's respect for Maria Montessori and to honor her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Still, the Montessoris are not allowed to leave the country until the war is over.

#### **1939-1946**

Training courses in Madras, Kodaikanal, Karachi, and Ahmedabad in India, and in Ceylon.  
Further develops the Cosmic Education Plan for the Elementary years with Mario's collaboration.

#### **1941-1942**

*The Child* (1941) and *Reconstruction in Education* (1942) published in India.

#### **1946**

The war over, Maria and Mario Montessori return to Europe.  
Training course in London; visit to Scotland.  
*Education for a New World* published in India.

#### **1947**

Maria and Mario Montessori establish a Montessori Centre in London.  
Trip to Italy: revival of the Montessori Society. Montessori establishments start to be reopened.  
Assistants to Infancy work initiated in Rome.  
Return to India to give a training course in Adyar.

#### **1948**

Training courses in Ahmedabad, Adyar, and Poona; lectures in Bombay.  
Trip to Gwalior, India; supervises the opening of a model school up to age twelve.  
Visit to the Montessori training centre with model school in Colombo (Ceylon).  
*De l'enfant à l'adolescent (From Childhood to Adolescence)* published in French. This book sets out Maria Montessori's concepts for elementary and adolescent education.  
*The Discovery of the Child, To Educate the Human Potential, What You Should Know about Your Child*, and *Child Training* published in Madras, India.

#### **1949**

First nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize (again in 1950 and 1951).  
One-month training course in Pakistan, assisted by Mario and Albert Joosten.  
Definitive return to Europe. Eighth International Montessori Congress in San Remo, Italy.  
*The Absorbent Mind* published in India.  
Publication of her last major work: *Formazione dell'uomo* (in English, *The Formation of Man*, Adyar 1955).

#### **1950**

Lecture tour of Norway and Sweden.  
Speaks at the General Conference of UNESCO in Florence.  
International conference in Amsterdam in honor of Maria Montessori's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### **1951**

Ninth International Montessori Congress in London.  
Last training course run by Maria Montessori held in Innsbruck, Austria.

#### **1952**

Maria Montessori dies May 6 in Noordwijk aan Zee, Netherlands; she is buried at the local Catholic cemetery.