



shaping our future together

Strategic Priorities

COUNTRYSIDE
DAY SCHOOL



“Character formation cannot be taught. It comes from experience and not from explanation.”

- Dr. Maria Montessori

This is true of the child starting from the first taste of independence as a toddler. CDS classrooms emulate “real life,” giving children the opportunity to turn obstacles into opportunities, resulting in the development of strong character. It is like an “internship to adulthood.” The challenges and successes they experience every day in the classroom help them develop grit, agency, empathy, honesty, initiative, resourcefulness, and respect. We don’t teach character curriculum. We live it.

CHARACTER

Strategic Initiatives

- Utilize the school-parent partnership to foster the optimal conditions for children to develop good character.
 1. Share specific examples with families how we see their children developing their character; distinguish strengths and areas of focus for growth.
 2. Establish opportunities to mentor interested families on how to intentionally parent for the development of good character.
 3. Find ways for parents to share their character successes within the Countryside Community and the local community at large.
- Enable families to see how character is integrated naturally into the classroom experience.
 1. Enhance formal and informal opportunities for parents and prospective parents to visit classrooms, witnessing the magic of children exhibiting good character.
 2. Inform parents about CDS’s focus on character development so they can be confident ambassadors of the school.
 3. Create a platform for parents to share successes and challenges in developing good character and help prospective parents see this unique value.
- Expand opportunities in the school and with the local community to make CDS and its mission a known commodity regarding character development.
 1. Create a culture of stewardship and citizenship in developmentally appropriate ways for all levels of our educational program from 16 months to 14 years old.
 2. Create opportunities for elementary and middle school students to make real contributions in the community.
 3. Gather and communicate information from alums and alum parents about the outcome and value of a CDS education.

“Our care of the [students] should be governed, not by the desire to make [them] learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within [them] that light which is called intelligence.”
- Dr. Maria Montessori

Our Montessori philosophy and mission motivate children to take responsibility for their own education, involve them as caretakers of their school environment, and engage them daily as both students and teachers. Every class is filled with teachers, because we understand the importance of our students seeing themselves not only as learners but also as contributors to the body of academic knowledge in their classrooms. Our Montessori program offers a safe and caring environment for students to build their knowledge and create rather than just consume, content, and get ready for the real world. Our students become exceptional adults, ready to confidently take their places in society.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Strategic Initiatives

- Prioritize resources so parents can better understand their children's academic achievements.
 1. Commit to a new digital record keeping system that allows parents to have access to their children's work on-demand as age appropriate.
 2. Connect the names of Montessori materials with the academic knowledge that they help students build.
 3. Show parents how the Montessori curriculum incorporates and exceeds essential academic content.
- Reconnect with alums to gather information about what they have achieved academically and professionally.
 1. Showcase statistically areas of long-term achievement of alumni.
 2. Create a plan to display this information to current and prospective parents.
 3. Highlight alumni successes through testimonials regarding transition from CDS to high school.
- Demonstrate to parents that CDS offers one continuous academic experience in which each subsequent program maximizes the gains made in the previous program.
 1. Interview parents and understand why they value the complete CDS program and communicate this to potential families.
 2. Communicate the critical importance of freedom and responsibility in the classroom in achieving academic excellence for each student at every level.
 3. Communicate through examples of student work how following a curriculum more organically, so that students can follow personal interests, is critical to creating an authentic love of learning that lasts for life.



“Joy, feeling one's own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul.”

- Dr. Maria Montessori

This is the essence of the CDS experience for students, parents, faculty, staff, and trustees: growing and learning together. CDS attracts families and faculty who are committed to the children and their growth and are eager to support each other in those efforts. Because of mixed-age Montessori student groupings, faculty come to know and support students and families in unique and impactful ways. Older children become mentors and leaders to their younger classmates and come to see themselves as essential stewards of their community.

COMMUNITY

Strategic Initiatives

- Involve parents, both formally and informally, in the everyday program so they understand the value each program level offers students.
 1. Employ technology that allows parents more regular views into the classroom.
 2. Find more opportunities for parents to make meaningful contributions to the classrooms and community.
 3. Establish parent involvement in the enrollment process and utilize this relationship to strengthen and accelerate the connection with new families as they get to know CDS.
- Take steps to help all community members feel a sense of pride, engagement, and being valued.
 1. Ensure CDS is a place that makes intentional consideration of all members of our community through work with diversity - a wide and deep bank of diverse thinkers who bring different cultures and experiences to the community; equity - classrooms that meet students where they are and give help and support when and where it is needed, need-based financial aid for families; and inclusion - the school is a safe and welcoming place for all of our constituents regardless of culture, gender, race, sexual or religious orientation.
 2. Open the CDS campus as appropriate, allowing parents to utilize it for CDS social, club, and family experiences.
 3. Encourage parents to be ambassadors of CDS, using social media to highlight the value and outcomes of a CDS education.
- Grow the visibility of CDS and its mission in the community in order to have greater name recognition in the independent school market.
 1. Change our blog to focus on character and parenting, revealing Countryside's unique understanding and expertise on the development of good character.
 2. Connect Middle School students in real and significant ways to the local community, particularly connecting them with exposure to businesses and professions.
 3. Partner with local compatible businesses to find opportunities to offer informational parent sessions.

