



**A COMPARISON OF:**  
**THE MONTESSORI CASA CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT & A TRADITIONAL**  
**SCHOOL SETTING FOR JK/SK**

<b>Montessori Casa Program</b>	<b>Traditional JK/SK Program</b>
Mixed age groups: Students are ages 3-6 and grouped together.	Same age groups: single age and grade levels in a classroom.
Students freely choose their own workspace, and choose from a variety of work space choices from collective tables, single table, or floor space. Free to move as they need.	Students are expected to sit at assigned desk or tables and must ask to move or leave their assigned space
An uninterrupted work cycle for the duration of the morning and afternoon work cycle provides the students the ability to choose which work and activities of interest and decide how long. Many of the materials integrate a variety of subjects.	A certain amount of time is allotted for each subject and students work on the same subjects at the same time as directed by the teacher
Teachers facilitate work choices for individual and collaborative learning opportunities amongst all peers	Teachers make work and lesson choices based on a strict curriculum outline.
Practice and repetition are encouraged to master concepts learned. Older students pair with younger students to maximize their understanding of concepts.	Students are given limited time to practice, often resulting in home work or limited understanding of concepts.
The Montessori manipulatives provide the use of a hands on experience for sensory exploration, movement, and collaborative and independent learning outcomes.	Use of rote learning, textbooks, and worksheets
Child centered: A carefully prepared environment encourages students to practice self-discipline.	Adult centered: The teacher controls the classroom and enforces discipline.
Emphasis is placed on collaboration with peers	Emphasis is placed on competing with peers.
Students independently use self-teaching materials, learn from each other, and teacher provides individualized lessons to students.	Teacher gives direction to the whole class based on a pre-determined curriculum.
Inquiry based learning.	Standards based learning.



Focus on the process, no use of tests or grades	Focus in the product, use of tests and grades
Students can advance academically at their own pace, without limits	Students are expected to be within the norms of what is average for their grade level.
Students are introduced to the phonetics of English and learn early reading skills.	Students are introduced to whole reading method and are taught to memorize.
Students practice foundation activities to prepare their hand for writing and begin to write in Cursive.	Students are expected to know how to print and write through visual copying and memorization.
The classroom is enriched with Culture materials and students are introduced to concepts such as Botany, Zoology, Geography, and History.	Limited requirement and expectation for the student to engage in wider learning.