

Montessori

Research

Australia

# Montessori Keystones: Winter 2024

**Montessori said, “What I want now is a body of colleagues, research workers, who will examine what I have already done, apply my principles as far as I have gone, not in a spirit of opposition or conviction, but as a matter of pure experiment.”**

(Kramer, 1976, p. 262)

## **Australian Research Study**

Update on the Montessori Developmental Learning Framework: 0-6, V1.0

## **New Zealand Research Study and Snapshots:**

Looking for Peace in the Australian National Curricula

Montessori Schools and Centres Australia (MSCA) Annual Conference on  
Peace

***Montessori ‘interviewed’ on Educating for Peace***

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OPEN ACCESS REVIEWED BY PEERS

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Lands across Australia. We also acknowledge and extend our respect to Elders, past and present. We recognise and celebrate the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia, including their role in the education and care of children. We also acknowledge and recognise the rich histories and diverse cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the valuable contribution their diversity brings.

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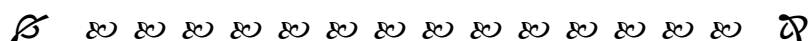
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*A spider web highlights how everything in Montessori interrelates and impacts on everything else.*



# The Montessori Developmental Learning Framework: 0-6 (MDLF) V1.0

[peer reviewed, in final phase September 2024]

Commissioned by Montessori Research Australia (2024)

## INTRODUCTION

The Montessori Developmental Learning Framework 0-6 (MDLF: 0-6) was commissioned by Montessori Research Australia (MRA) in August 2022 with the aim to complete by September 2024. The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), Australian Curriculum (AC) and NSW Curriculum (NESA) have gone through reviews and updates recently, MRA is seeking recognition for the Montessori Developmental Learning Framework: 0-6, after national consultation and review, to become an approved learning framework to establish Montessori education and pedagogy as an EYLF in its own right.

The EYLF has five Learning Outcomes whereas the MDLF: 0-6 has these six Montessori Learning Outcomes. These are:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity, individuality, supporting their natural development.
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world, and interconnectedness of all life.
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing, respect and purpose.
4. Children are confident, absorbed, intrinsically motivated, and involved learners.
5. Children are effective and collaborative communicators.
6. Children (5-6 years) are successful learners, confident, creative individuals, active and informed citizens developing social responsibility.

The overall aim of developing this document is to highlight some of the main differences between Montessori and other settings, e.g., 3-6 classes have Kindergarten/Foundation children (Outcome 6), environments include specialised Montessori Materials and Montessori educator's approach, and training is fully focus on their relationship with each child and their environments. Additionally, this document will directly reduce the paperwork workload and therefore increase the time for educators to lead the learning and development of children in the setting. Hence, for curriculum compliance any Montessori setting would be able to utilise either the MDLF:0-6 or the EYLF and Australian Curriculum Foundation level/ NESA Kindergarten level.

Therefore, in April 2024 all Montessori schools and centres in Australia were invited to read and consult on sections of the draft MDLF: 0-6. MRA discerned that Montessori schools and centres are highly autonomous, with principals empowered to make decisions on curriculum implementation, teaching, assessment practices, professional learning, and school management and this would be reflected in the submissions. A targeted consultation period was conducted from 3<sup>rd</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 followed by a national consultation period which lasted from 30<sup>th</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024 (see Table 1). Once finalised (release date expected September 2024) the MDLF: 0-6 and resource documents will support your setting to demonstrate government compliance.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>25</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Consultations</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Principals Centre Directors Deputies Teacher Trainers Educational Leaders Educators</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>States &amp; Territories Represented</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ACT, NSW, QLD, SA, VIC, WA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>15</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Submissions from</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">NSW, VIC, WA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>8</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Expert Meetings held with</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Principal, Deputy, Centre Director, Educator, Trainer</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Consultant's Qualifications</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">—</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Education degrees, Masters, PhD Studies, Teacher Trainers</p>
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*Table 1: MDLF: 0-6 consultation period.*

Additionally, seven resource documents have been developed and peer reviewed to support the MDLF:0-6 and can be read in conjunction with MDLF: 0-6 or on their own. The Assessors' Checklist provides a practical and straight forward way to see if your setting complies and supports the assessors understanding of Montessori Materials and approach when they visit for Assessment and Rating visits. Other documents include Critical Reflection, Transitioning, Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective in Montessori environments, Environmental and sustainability practices in a Montessori daily program, Healthy eating and physical wellbeing (including SunSmart Presentation), and research studies on children and technology (also see Montessori Keystones: Autumn 2024).

## **EYLF AND AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM BACKGROUND**

### **The Early Years Learning Framework v2.0 (2021)**

Engaged by ACECQA, on behalf of all governments, to deliver the National Quality Framework (NQF) Approved Learning Frameworks (ALFs) with an update project (Australian Government Department of Education, 2022).

In 2007, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that the Australian and state and territory governments would work in partnership on a National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care (NQA). A key element of the NQA is Australia's first national EYLF would support early childhood providers, teachers, and educators to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to 5 years and through the transition to school. Educators guided by EYLF to reinforce in their daily practice the principles laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention). Under the National Law, services must deliver an educational program to all children being educated and cared for that is:

- based on an approved learning framework,
- delivered in accordance with that approved learning framework,
- based on the developmental needs, interests, and experiences of each child,
- designed to take into account the individual differences of each child.

### **The Australian Curriculum v9 (2022).**

Developed to improve the quality, equity, and transparency of Australia's education system. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is an independent statutory authority with a vision to inspire movement in the learning of all young Australians through world-class curriculum, assessment, and reporting (ACARA).

ACARA used a collaborative curriculum development process to produce the Australian Curriculum. In 2009 the 'Shape of the Australian Curriculum', first approved by the Council of Commonwealth and state and territory education ministers, guided the development of the Australian Curriculum. The paper reflected the position adopted by ministers collectively in their 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians . In 2012 approval for the Australian Curriculum by the ACARA Board, reflects the evolving processes used in the development of the Australian Curriculum.

### **The New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA)**

An independent statutory authority established in January 2017 under the Education Standards Authority Act 2013 and NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning. NESA sets and monitors quality teaching, learning, assessment and school standards across NSW government and non-government schools and early childhood services for Kindergarten to Year 12 curriculum, accreditation of early childhood and school teachers, initial teacher education programs (ITE) and professional development courses, the application of the professional teaching standards, the granting of Record of School Achievement and Higher School Certificates (HSC), basic skills testing, and monitoring school compliance with registration requirements.

NESA say their role is unique by national and international standards because they bring together teaching standards, ITE program accreditation, curriculum, assessment, and school standards under one umbrella education authority. NESA's purpose is to help all children and young people in NSW leave school ready to take advantage of life's opportunities and rise to its inevitable challenges. NESA strives to achieve this purpose through 5 main strategic goals, community is assured of effective, evidence-based school education, all children have opportunity to learn and are protected, students have access to an explicit learning entitlement that clearly sets out what students have a right to know, understand and be able to do, students finish school ready to succeed in life and schools and teachers can focus on effective teaching.

## **RELEVANT RESEARCH IN THIS AREA**

### **Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration Vision (2019).**

A world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face (Education Council). The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration commits governments to ensuring all children learn about the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to seeing all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their education and all facets of life.

Contributing to this goal, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap identifies early childhood education, care, and development as a national policy priority. Furthermore, it commits to ensuring all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years. Early childhood education has a critical role to play in delivering this outcome and advancing Reconciliation in Australia.

### **Shaping our Future Vision (2022)**

The children's education and care sector have a sustainable, high-quality workforce of teachers and educators that is highly respected and valued by the broader community. (Education Services Australia). ACECQA, on behalf of all governments, coordinated the development of this new strategy. A 10-year strategy with six focus areas being monitored and evaluated:

1. Professional recognition.
2. Attraction and retention.
3. Qualifications and career pathways.
4. Leadership and capability.
5. Wellbeing.
6. Data and evidence.

### **ACECQA Quality Improvement Research Project (2019).**

Commissioned by ACECQA this national study of long day care (LDC) services that had improved their National Quality Standard (NQS) rating over two sequential NQS assessments. This report presents findings from the three phase, mixed-methods Quality Improvement Research Project, which investigated the characteristics and internal processes of quality improvement in LDC services (Harrison, L. J, Hadley, F, Irvine, S, Davis, B, Barblett, L, Hatzigianni, M, Mulhearn, G, Waniganayake, M, Andrews, R, & Li, P).

Findings revealed that the Approved Provider was key to ensuring the service could focus on quality improvement (enabled Educational Leader, educators) and meaningful engagement with the Assessment and Rating process.

### **AITSL Review to reduce red tape for teachers and school leaders (2020).**

Shifting the balance: Increasing the focus on teaching and learning by reducing the burden of compliance and administration (AITSL). Findings included supporting this initiative would be central coordination in a big department to ground up sharing of good practice and communication. Cross-sectoral cooperation within states and territories is a key part of a successful approach to the reduction of the red tape burden particularly on non-government schools.

### **Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework VEYLDF (2023).**

Supports all professionals who work with children aged 0 to 8. The VEYLDF was revised in partnership between the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and the department. The VEYLDF upholds the image of the child as a rights holder and a competent learner with capacities to learn from birth. The VEYLDF was released in 2009 by the Department of Education and Training (Victoria) having been adapted from the EYLF, implemented during 2010. A key difference between the two frameworks includes how EYLF focuses on children from 0 to 5, while VEYLDF is 0 to 8 years. Both frameworks share the same five learning and development outcomes, with the VEYLDF linking to the first three-year levels of the Victorian curriculum F-10.

### **Queensland kindergarten learning guideline v2, 2019 (QKLG).**

Providing advice for planning, documenting and assessing children's learning and development, sharing information with parents/carers and, with consent, schools. QKLG describes a set of 5 learning and development areas (identity, connectedness, wellbeing, active learning, communicating) that align to the 5 EYLF broad learning outcomes (children have a strong sense of identity; connected with and contribute to their world; have a strong sense of wellbeing; confident and involved learners; and effective communicators). QKLG was developed by Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA).



In 'Education and Peace' Montessori stated (p. 30) that,

**“An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves the spiritual development of humans, the enhancement of their value as individuals, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live.”**

Montessori Schools and Centres Australia (MSCA) are holding their annual conference in Sydney in September 21<sup>st</sup>, and it is called **‘On a Hope and a Promise: An Education for Peace.’**

Maria Montessori spoke about the child as both a hope and a promise for humanity. She said, *“Everyone talks about peace, but no one educates for peace. People educate for competition, and this is the beginning of any war. When we educate to cooperate and be in solidarity with one another, that day we will be educating for peace.”*

World events in the past few years have highlighted how Montessori’s words still ring true for us today. As administrators and educators dedicated to Montessori education – an education for peace – we hold both a hope for the future and a promise to all children in our schools and early learning centres: to work together in solidarity, to work in cooperation rather than competition, and to care for our environment as well as the individuals within it.

The 2024 MSCA Grassroots Conference aims to unpack the meaning of what Montessori described as an Education for Peace and what is required of us, including our preparation as adults. Maria Montessori’s vision for education might feel unachievable and lofty, but as Montessorians, there’s nothing more worthwhile than this. After all, Dr Montessori herself said, ***“Education is the best weapon for peace.”***



## **CONFERENCE TOPICS:**

### **Cultivating Peace by crafting your environment for the change you wish to see in the world.**

Alex Crawford (Clinical Psychologist) will talk of Alex will explore the profound connection between Montessori principles and peace psychology in shaping transformative educational environments. She will draw from Maria Montessori's insights, her own extensive clinical experience supporting children, parents/ carers and educators, and her strong interest in peace psychology, to offer practical insights for cultivating peaceful learning environments. This keynote will delve into the significance of self-awareness and emotional intelligence in educators, and how these personal attributes can be leveraged to foster a nurturing and inclusive learning atmosphere. The session will emphasise 'peace in action'—practical ways educators can embody and facilitate peaceful connections within diverse learning communities.

### **Restorative Practice as a peace building strategy in education.**

Kristy Elliott (Director & Lead Trainer at Restorative Pathways) explains. Peace building is an active process of developing positive, healthy relationships and preventing and navigating conflict. Restorative Practice provides a strategy and framework for teaching and learning peace building skills in educational settings. In this hands-on, experiential workshop, Kristy will invite participants to explore the use of restorative circles as a pedagogy and practice for peace building. Circle pedagogy is a collaborative, democratic and participatory model of teaching, learning and community building in education settings. Best of all, it can be adapted to be used with all students, staff, parents and carers. The practice of circles builds and maintains positive relationships; establishes community norms and expectations; enhances individual and community wellbeing; increases felt experiences of safety develops socio-emotional capabilities; celebrates the interconnectedness of all people; promotes inclusion and equity; and strengthens experiences of school belonging

**Transformation of the adult: A trauma-informed perspective** [Leena Savolainen]

**Harmonising Home and School: Engaging Parents in the Montessori Journey** [Shelly Raji & Janette Reimerink].

**Neurodiversity in a Montessori context – A personal journey** [Sarah Bazylenko]

**Conflict mediation as a catalyst for positive change** [Kirsti Hitz-Morton]

**Dance as a pathway towards peace** [Kei Ikeda]

**From turmoil to transformation** [Rebecca Dallam]

**Making peace with time** [Kat Beaton]

# Looking for Peace in the Australian National Curricula

By Katerina Standish, University of Otago, Aotearoa New Zealand (2015)

## ABSTRACT

Education can be a source of cultural attitudes—a transmission belt—a cultural institution that can dispense communal values and cultural ideals in both teaching and curriculum. This empirical mixed methods study utilises the methodologies of directive (qualitative) and summative (quantitative) content analysis to analyse the national curricular statements of Australia (Early Learning, Foundation to 10 and, Senior 11-12) to determine if three elements common in peace education programs appear: recognition of violence (direct, structural or cultural); addressing conflict non-violently; and creating the conditions of positive peace. It finds that despite a copious amount of violent content, overall, the curricula does not recognise such deeds as deliberate acts of harm, that the curricula encompasses limited content regarding transforming conflict non-violently and that aspects contributing to positive peace are infrequent, largely lack the intention of creating equanimous space.

## ELEMENTS OF PEACE

There is evidence that education systems are capable of positive and negative outcomes depending upon which information is shared, how information is shared, and what chance students have to participate in the co-creation of knowledge (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Freire, 2001). What schools do not teach may be as important as what they do teach...because ignorance is not simply a neutral void; it has important effects on kinds of options one is able to consider. (Eisner, 1985, p. 97).

The Hague Appeal for Peace states: A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems; have the skills to resolve conflict constructively; know and live by international standards of human rights, gender and racial equality; appreciate cultural diversity; and respect the integrity of the Earth. Such learning cannot be achieved without intentional, sustained and systematic education for peace. (Hague Appeal, 1999, para 3).

In this study, three elements of peace education were examined: recognising violence, nonviolent conflict transformation, and positive peace.

### **Element One: Recognising Violence**

To be considered recognition of violence, a passage needs to semantically indicate that something is an undesirable type of violence. Violence is specified in this study to be deliberate human acts that cause harm. Violence is distinct from danger or hazards (which can be ecological or environmental), as violence is deliberate and avoidable harm done by humans to other humans, or to the more-than human world. This element uses Galtung's (1990) conceptualization of violence and includes cultural violence (violence that emerges from a worldview), structural violence (violence that is an invisible social process), and direct violence (an action or threat of an action that causes deliberate harm). The researcher found National Curriculum and EYLF both contain no references that recognise violence in cultural, structural or direct forms, EYLF only refers to safe environments.

### **Element Two: Nonviolent Conflict Transformation**

Nonviolent conflict transformation involves techniques that permit individuals to address conflict without using violence. Peace education considers that conflict transformation tools or techniques should strictly be nonviolent (Harris, 2004). This means, for example, that a conflict resolved using weapons is not an instance of nonviolent transformation, as violence was used to attain the aftereffects. Example of nonviolent conflict transformation techniques include: group problem solving, collaboration, negotiation, mediation, diplomacy, nonviolent resistance, dialogue processes, and compassionate listening. The researcher found that only two nonviolent conflict transformation tools were used in the curriculums: mediation and negotiation.

### **Element Three: Positive Peace**

Positive peace (Galtung, 1996) is peace that is more than a cessation of direct violence (negative peace), but the presence of structural nonviolence (Standish, 2014). Positive peace encompasses nine fundamental factors of positive perception, beliefs, and behaviours (Galtung, 1996; Boulding, 2000; Synott, 2005; Noddings, 2012; Harris & Morrison 2013), including:

1. Peace Zone (safe spaces where violence is absent)
2. Peace Bond (positive relationships characterised by kindness and empathy)
3. Social Justice (presence of fairness or equality)
4. Eco Mind (harmonious living between humanity and nature)
5. Link Mind (perception of interconnectivity and/or interdependency)
6. Gender Mind (awareness of gender as an important facet of understanding)
7. Resilience (ability to absorb calamity: personal, social, or environmental)
8. Wellbeing (health, wellness, and taking responsibility for self or others)
9. Prevention (knowing ways to stop violence before it starts).

## STUDY

This analysis involved a comprehensive and detailed examination of over 1400 pages of curricular documents including a section from the Australian Curriculum Foundation to year 10 entitled General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum. The curricula under review in this study were obtained from the Australian Government Department of Education and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). In this study early childhood education curriculum (Belonging, Being and Becoming) was accessed online.

## FINDINGS

Findings included that:

EYLF	Australian Curriculum
<p>The researcher found that curriculum presented narrative content concerning several elements of building positive peace with most numerous references related to Peace Bond, Wellbeing. Passages spoke of interacting positively with others, acting with compassion and kindness, expressing concern for others, and educators should model care, empathy, respect for children, staff and families. Students are urged to gradually learn to ‘read’ the behaviours of others, to demonstrate increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others, and to see patterns in their feelings, ideas, words and actions and those of others. Wellbeing is defined as good physical health, feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and successful social functioning. Promoting children to acquire competence in care and safety for themselves and others and encourages teachers who give priority to nurturing relationships. Wellbeing achieved by learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, personal hygiene, physical fitness, emotions, social relationships), and by making certain that children are happy, healthy, safe and connected to others. Issues of fairness or equality (Social Justice) composed the third largest content area and were characterised by statements urging students to develop the ability to recognise unfairness and bias, and the capacity to act with compassion and kindness, to find new ways of working fairly and justly, and that early childhood educators should draw children’s attention to issues of fairness. Children are</p>	<p>The researcher found that Element 1: Recognising Violence had 137 descriptions of violent acts or mindsets exist in the curriculum including: colonisation, prejudice, use of atomic bomb, racism, sexism, battle, bullying, persecution, being hung, drawn, and quartered, slavery, landscape threatened by human activity forcible removal of children from their families, cultural inequalities, attacks on monasteries, dispossession, the Holocaust, stereotyping, massacres, propaganda, cyber bullying, war, forced movement. Such passages contribute to communication of violent acts without defining them as forms of violence (deliberate/avoidable acts of human harm). However, 7 passages do regard violence as harmful human interaction. Element 2: Nonviolent Conflict Transformation 4 tools can be used for transforming conflict non-violently: collaboration, dialogue, mediation, negotiation. Act of collaborating is represented with abundant passages that encourage behaviour of participating in learning with others - to perform a specific task, positively contribute to groups, work for common goal, work to identify cooperative behaviours. Act of collaboration is considered technique to build individual social capacity, work collaboratively in class/in the field, students develop their interpersonal, social skills, learn to appreciate different insights, perspectives of other group members. Practice of dialogue is present too, students identify positive ways to initiate discussions with others, use effective strategies</p>

asked to consider advantage and disadvantage, to support the inclusion of all children in play, to become aware of fairness, and to develop the ability to recognise unfairness.

Narrative content relating to interconnectivity and/or interdependence (Link Mind) were illustrated by passages that encourage students to develop an increased understanding of the interdependence between land, people, plants, and animals, to look for examples of interdependence in the environment and discuss the ways the life and health of living things are interconnected, and to acknowledge children's interdependence with others. Children to develop their emerging inter-dependence, and to urge educators to help children to learn about their responsibilities to others, to appreciate their connectedness and interdependence as learners, and to value collaboration and teamwork.

Evidence of Resilience (measures that assist an individual to absorb sudden disaster) related to helping children cope with the unexpected and manage change. Passages encouraged educators to provide children with the capacity to cope with day-to-day stress and challenges [and the] readiness to persevere when faced with unfamiliar and challenging learning situations. As Peace Zones are considered safe spaces where violence is absent, learning centres should be safe environments, where children are encouraged to negotiate play spaces to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others.

There was one reference to gender (Gender Mind), located in a passage defining inclusion: inclusion involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances, and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes.

No references were made to the positive peace elements of preventing violence (Prevention) and harmony between humanity and nature (Eco Mind).

for dialogue/discussion. Encourages students to share experiences, to exchange views with peers, to listen to others' ideas, recognise that others may see things differently. Minimal evidence of practices of negotiation, mediation, both techniques are referred to positively.

Negotiation is intoned through passages urging students to negotiate positive outcomes to problems, negotiate solutions, and resolve conflict. Phrases such as use mediation skills, to support people holding different views, to apply generate, evaluate strategies such as active listening, mediation, negotiation to prevent, resolve interpersonal problems, conflicts, mediate cultural inequalities, mediate cultural difference, role cultural mediation plays in learning to live together.

Element Three: Positive Peace. All but one aspect of positive peace was present. Passages related to interconnectivity/interdependency (Link Mind), interconnections, places, people, organisations are interconnected, holistic thinking is seeing connections between phenomena/processes within/between places. Students investigate connection between places, people, meaning, significance that places hold, Students consider how connections between places, people, environments affect lives of people, sustainable patterns of living rely on interdependence of healthy social, economic, ecological systems. Peace Bonds encouraged through students developing empathy for/ understanding of, others, creating connections, building positive relationships. Developing students' abilities to empathise with others, to imagine/ describe their own feelings if they were put in someone else's place. Gender (Gender Mind) is referred to in sociological/ biological terms. Responsibilities of women, role of men, text examines roles, concepts of family, or relationship to land. Gender was relevant in Social Justice passages relating to status of women, gender equality, women's movements. Better understanding/ appreciation different points of view, develop awareness of fairness, justice/fair play, to work to create a socially just world. Ethical theories introduce concepts such as equality, respect, truth, justice, connectedness, describe instances of fair/unfair treatment, importance of giving everyone a fair go. Passages for Social Justice by exploring instances where equality, fairness, dignity and non-discrimination are required. Wellbeing - students explore programs made to reduce gap between differences in wellbeing, to reduce

	<p>regional inequalities, to improve wellbeing of remote Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities, how can we look after places we live in, refers positively to students who can manage their own wellbeing, relate well to others, make informed decisions. A reference regarding Resilience, Prevention, Eco Mind. No content related to notion of safe space (Peace Zone).</p>
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Katerian Standish is an Associate Professor (Senior Lecturer) in Peace and Conflict, University of Otago, Aoratora New Zealand and the Deputy Director, National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. Dr Standish has been a community peacebuilder for over two decades and specialises in personal peacebuilding (intervention of violence of self). Her past research and publications have included content related to asymmetric warfare and women, gender and violence, ethnic conflict, peace education and phenomena of deliberate life-ending acts. She is interested in decolonisation, personal peacebuilding and violence transformation and she is originally from western Canada. In addition to this article, she has also researched looking for peace in the English, Scottish, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia and Swedish curriculums.

### To cite this article:

Standish, K. (2015). Looking for Peace in the Australian National Curricula. *Peace and Conflict Studies*: 22(2). Article 5. DOI: 10.46743/1082-7307/2015.1296

Standish also wrote articles on ‘Looking for peace in national curriculum: the PECA Project in New Zealand’ (2015).

This was the pilot study for the Peace Education Curricular Analysis Project – a project that seeks to become a longitudinal and global analysis of national curriculum statements for pro-peace values. The methodologies used in this mixed methods study include directive and summative content analysis. This analysis finds that the curricular statements of New Zealand have made progress to educate students toward peace and non-violence and that in general, the early childhood curricular statement incorporates a greater amount of pro-peace content than the primary and secondary curriculum statement. Opportunities exist to strengthen peace education content in future New Zealand curricular statements.

Standish, K. (2015). Looking for peace in national curriculum: the PECA Project in New Zealand. *Journal of Peace Education*, 13(1), 18–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400201.2015.1100110>

Additionally, in 2016 Standish and Talahma wrote ‘Looking for Peace in the National Curricula of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’.

What values do national curricular statements communicate related to peace, conflict, violence and nonviolence? Schools are places that teach morals and mind-sets—transmission belts—cultural establishments that can contribute to how a student learns (pedagogy) and what a student learns (curriculum). Informed by Curriculum Theory and Peace Education Theory this mixed-method study utilises directive and summative content analysis to inspect the General Statement, Teachers Guide and Shari’a national curricular statements at the elementary and preparatory level (mandatory education) for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Elementary and preparatory education is compulsory in the KSA and this study found the mandatory education of the KSA has variable content that relates to the three PE elements and that the KSA mandatory curricula only minimally teaches peace.

Standish, K., & Rula, T. (2016) "Looking for Peace in the National Curricula of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," *Peace and Conflict Studies*: 23(2:2). DOI: 10.46743/1082-7307/2016.1354

Furthermore, in 2018 Standish and Nygren wrote ‘Looking for peace in the Swedish National Curricula’.

This study analyses, in the light of peace educational theory, the presence and absence of peace elements in the Swedish national curriculum for compulsory schooling. Using the theoretical framework developed within the international Peace Education Curricular Analysis Project, content analysis and mixed methods we identify how the Swedish curriculum underscore and lack the peace elements of recognizing violence, non-violent conflict transformation and positive peace. Our analysis shows that the Swedish curriculum supports teaching and learning which may help pupils to identify



violence in society and internationally, lack many aspects of non-violent conflict transformation (especially conflict resolution) and emphasise positive peace in numerous but limited ways.

Standish, K., & Nygren, T. (2018). Looking for peace in the Swedish National Curricula. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 4(2), 92–106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2018.1474701>.

Additionally, in 2015 the Australian Government commissioned a report on ‘Links between education and peace’ which asked what are the links between education and peace?

Education is a significant contributor to peace and appears in two of the 24 indicators in the Positive Peace Index produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace. Education can lead to peace and be a part of ‘building back better’ by supporting the transformation of the security situation, political institutions, economic regeneration and social development.

Key lessons about how education can contribute to peace, recovery, and reconstruction include the following:

- Conflict sensitivity should be incorporated into educational planning to ensure that curricula and delivery do not reinforce inequalities or create divisions.
- Schools must be peaceful environments.
- Early Childhood Development interventions have been shown to have a positive impact on peace.
- Education should be inclusive, affordable, and accessible. It should address inequality and exclusion and provide opportunities for previously marginalised communities.
- Education can help develop identities and deal with the legacies and grievances of previous conflict, improving social cohesion and moving societies towards reconciliation.
- The provision of an education service may in itself reduce the risk of conflict, if a population feels provided for.
- Education and skills training can help reduce the risk of people turning to or returning to conflict and can support economic regeneration.
- Education of former combatants can reduce grievances and support reintegration by giving ex-combatants skills needed for work.
- Access to education can reduce attitudes towards and participation in violence, although it can also raise awareness of injustice and discrimination.
- Social, political and cultural issues must be addressed alongside the delivery of education.

Thompson, S. (2015). *Links between education and peace*. GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1308. Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham / Oxford: HEART

## ⌘ Maria Montessori 'interview' ⌘

To highlight Montessori's words, we can consider her speaking as if she was in an interview.

Montessori's book '*Education for Peace*' provides the opportunity for Maria to explain what she means by peace... below is part of the address in Copenhagen she gave on 22 May 1937.

[Montessori, M. (1992). *Education for Peace*, Clio Press. pp 28-32.]

### *Maria spoke about*

**Q:** Is education the cornerstone of peace

**Maria:** Education today, in this particular social period, is assuming truly unlimited importance. And the increased emphasis on its practical value can be summed up in one sentence: **education is the best weapon for peace**. If we consider the awesome power and technical perfection of armaments, which people trust to protect them in war, we are forced to conclude that education will not become an armament capable of ensuring the security and progress of the peoples of the world until it has attained the same level of excellence and scientific development. I am not speaking of the possible need for mechanical armaments, and I do not want to deal with the political question; I am merely saying that the true defence of mankind cannot be based on arms.

Wars will always follow one upon the other, and no people's grace and prosperity can ever be assured until we trust in the great 'armament for peace' that education represents. Since education is the true salvation of humanity and civilisation, it cannot be restricted to its present limits nor continue in its present form. Education today has fallen far behind contemporary needs. To use an analogy in keeping with the subject at hand, it might be said that education has remained at the level of the bow and arrow in comparison with today's armaments.

How can we fight powerful cannons and aerial bombardments with bows and arrows? That is why it is necessary to build and perfect the armament of education. It is obvious that education as the cornerstone of peace cannot consist only in attempting to prevent children from becoming fascinated by war. It is not enough to keep the child from playing with toy weapons, to stop making them study the history of humankind as a succession of feats of arms, and to stop teaching them that victory on the battlefield is a supreme honour. It is not even enough to instil in the child a love and a respect for all living beings and all the things that human beings have built through the centuries.

**Q:** Why has education so far not prevented wars?

**Maria:** This would be the role of the classroom in a much greater task, a campaign against war in and of itself, a role that we might describe as a negative one - the mere attempt to remove the threat of an imminent conflict - rather than a positive effort to bring about peace in the world. It is all too obvious that wars cannot be prevented by an education of this kind. If they could be, why have they not been prevented by the educational influence of civilised society, which proclaims that people's life and

liberty are sacred, or by the influence of religions, which have tried for thousands of years to teach humans to love their fellows? People do not go off to war because they are bloodthirsty or impatient to use their weapons. They would rather not fight wars, but they are drawn into them. They are all terrified of the scourge of war and would all like to escape it, and great moral and material pressure must be applied to make them abandon the safety of their homes and family life with their loved ones. People do not fight wars because they played with toy weapons when they were children. And teaching history based on memorising dates and events is certainly not the ideal method for making children want to be heroes.

War is clearly a complex phenomenon that we must investigate and understand, especially in our time. Humanity today is overwhelmed by events affecting the entire world with which education has not yet come to grips. Humankind today is like a small child who finds themselves alone and lost in a forest, at the mercy of any shadow that falls across their path and of any mysterious noise heard in the dark.

Humans do not understand the events that overwhelm them and are totally unable to protect themselves against them. Society has evolved in a purely external way, constructing enormous mechanisms and setting up complicated means of communication, but humanity meanwhile has remained ignorant and disorganised. Yes, the world's peoples are disorganised, and each individual thinks only of their own immediate well-being. Education as it is commonly regarded encourages individuals to go their own way and pursue their own personal interests. **Schoolchildren are taught not to help one another, not to prompt their classmates who don't know the answers**, but to concern themselves only with getting promoted at the end of the year and to win prizes in competition with fellow pupils. And these poor, selfish little creatures, who experimental psychology has proved are mentally exhausted, find themselves in later life like separate grains of sand in the desert; each one is isolated from their neighbour, and all of them are barren. If a storm comes up, these little human particles possessed of no life-giving spirituality are caught up in the gusts and form a deadly whirlwind.

**Q:** What can humans do? What is the secret?

**Maria:** An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves **the spiritual development of humans, the enhancement of their value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live**. The secret is this: making it possible for **humans to become the master of the mechanical environment** that oppresses them today. People, the producer, must become the Master of Production. Production today has been intensified by science and has become highly organised all over the world. It has therefore become necessary both to enhance human energies scientifically and to organise humanity proportionately. **People can no longer remain ignorant of their own natures and the world in which they live**. The real scourge that threatens them today is precisely this sort of ignorance. We must organise our efforts for peace

and prepare the way for it scientifically, through education. Education points the way to a new world to conquer: the world of the human spirit.

**Q:** So, the child maybe the answer?

**Maria:** In our experience with children, we observed that the human child is a spiritual embryo, endowed with mysterious sensitivities that guide them, with creative energies that tend to construct a sort of marvellous instrument in people's souls. Like a radio set that can receive the long and short waves that are transmitted through space, the sort of instrument that a child gradually constructs in their own soul is destined to receive the holy waves transmitting divine love through the boundless spheres of eternity. It is this sensitivity that makes humans uniquely valuable: humans are great because they can receive the emanations of the Godhead. The child is also capable of developing and giving us tangible proof of the possibility of a better humanity. They have shown us the true process of construction of the normal human being. We have seen **children totally change as they acquire a love for things and as their sense of order, discipline, and self-control develops within them as a manifestation of their total freedom. We have seen them labour steadily, drawing on their own energies and developing them as they work.**

**Q:** What can the child become?

**Maria:** **The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind.** If we therefore **mind this embryo as our most precious treasure**, we will be working for the greatness of humanity. The humans we educate in this way will be able to use divine powers to outstrip the humans of today who have entrusted their fate to machines. What is needed is faith in the grandeur and superiority of humans. If they have managed to **master the cosmic energies circulating in the atmosphere, they will be able to understand that the fire of genius, the value of intelligence, the light of conscience are also energies to be organised, to be regulated, to be treasured and put to good use in human social life.** Today these energies are scattered; or, rather, they are repressed and misdirected through the errors perpetuated by a kind of education that still holds sway all over the world.

**Q:** Do adults understand the child well enough?

**Maria:** The adult does not understand the child. Parents unconsciously battle with their children rather than helping them in their divine mission. Parents and children do not necessarily understand each other. An abyss yawns between them from the day the child is born. And this lack of understanding is human's undoing; it leads them astray, sickens their spirit, impoverishes them, and makes them fail to realise their potential. The lack of understanding between children and adults precipitates the tragedy of the human heart, which in later life manifests itself in a lack of sensitivity, in sloth, and in criminality. Those who have been humiliated are ashamed of themselves; the timid

withdraw into their shells; the fearful seek their own personal comfort. All the potential wealth of person's personality comes to nothing.

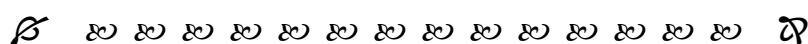
**Q:** What can education do?

**Maria:** Education must take advantage of the value of the **hidden instincts that guide humans** as they build their own life. Powerful among these instincts is the **social drive**. It has been our experience that if the child and the adolescent do not have a chance to engage in a **true social life, they do not develop a sense of discipline and morality**. These gifts in their case become end products of coercion rather than manifestations of freedom. The **human personality is shaped by continuous experiences; it is up to us to create for children, for adolescents, for young people an environment, a world that will readily permit such formative experiences**. The youngster's personality must come in contact with the world of production after an apprenticeship in experience; humans must be **guided first and foremost toward an awareness of their responsibilities with regard to human social organisation**. Thus, from early childhood on, human beings must have practical experience of what association is, and only then gradually fathom the secrets of the technical evolution of this society.

**Q:** What is needed?

**Maria:** Today we have an organisation of machines. What is needed are humans capable of using machines to carry out a lofty mission that each of them will be aware of and feel responsible for. It is absolutely certain that the **secret of future human power lies hidden within humanity as it develops** - within young people. Those nations that want war have managed to recognise and give scope to the powers hidden in children and young people to further their own interests, to organise them socially, to make them an active force in society. It is a tragedy that this truth has thus far been recognised only by those powers that seek war. But the fact that a truly powerful organisation of humanity cannot be improvised overnight is a reality that has great practical value. The groundwork for such an organisation must be laid in childhood, at the very roots of life. Society can be organised, in short, only if education offers humans a ladder of social experiences as they pass from one period of their life to another. Those who want war prepare young people for war; but those who want peace have neglected young children and adolescents, for they have been unable to organise them for peace.

Peace is a practical principle of human civilisation and social organisation that is based on the very nature of human. Peace does not enslave them; rather, it exalts them. It does not humiliate them, but rather makes them conscious of their own power over the universe. And **because it is based on people's nature, it is a constant, a universal principle that applies to all human beings**. Their principle must be our guide in building a science of peace and educating humans for peace.



## Do Montessorians need to carry out research?

Montessori was keen on research yet Standing (1957) stated that “less than thirty per cent of her research have as yet found their way into print” (p. xix), although Montessori carried out a “continual stream of research... carried on during the rest of her life” (p. 64). Montessori’s research “on the child’s development in these earliest years have been published under the title of ‘The Absorbent Mind’ (p. 69). “For fully forty years, now in this country, now in that; in favourable circumstances or difficult; in peacetime or in war —ceaselessly, calmly, undeterred by calamities private or national—Dr. Montessori went on steadily with her research. There is no single person living who knows the extent of them. They have never been collected together in one place” (p. 67). Standing stated that “lavish care and expenditure, the long and patient scientific research has gone into the creation of this *new world* for the *new children*” (p. 186).

Kramer (1976) revealed Montessori carried out “anthropological research in the elementary school” (p. 94). Montessori “had discussed with McClure for establishing in America a training institute for research and teaching in her methods” (p. 172). She had “plans for establishing an international educational research institution” (p. 187). Montessori argued that her experiences, “far from being rigid, were logical conclusions corresponding to the application of an exact and positive method. The behaviour of the children, being uncontrolled by rigid research, gave new evidence, something living, which issued from my experiments as a spring of water gushes from a rock” (p. 305). When Montessori was almost 50 she said, “*I don’t know what to do. There is so much of it, and nobody will ever collaborate. Either they accept what I say, and ask for more, or else they waste precious time in criticizing. What I want now is a body of colleagues, research workers, who will examine what I have already done, apply my principles as far as I have gone, not in a spirit of opposition or conviction, but as a matter of pure experiment. Then they can help me with constructive criticism, after, not before, the event. I have never yet had anyone-starting from my own previous body of knowledge-work shoulder to shoulder with me in a scientific independence. Now that doctors and psychologists are beginning to take an interest in normal children, perhaps some of them will help me. At present I am in a kind of isolation, which is the last thing I desire. Questo lavoro P troppo per una persone sola-sono troppo sola nel mondo*” (p. 262). Google translation – ‘*This job is too much for one person – I’m too alone in the world*’.

Mario Montessori (1976) stated, “*Laboratory experimentation, however, has practical limitations. That is why ways are sought to retain the advantages of the experimental method in the systematic study of phenomena which cannot be studied in the laboratory. One of the most important ways of doing this is through field experiments, where field is a normal environment, e.g., a school. Even closer to everyday experience is so-called action-research in which a community (a school) cooperates with experts in research programme. These experts not only investigate existing conditions but seek to improve them. Such research therefore has a normative character. Another method of investigation outside of the laboratory is to make the observer or researcher a member of group under observation. However, making and recording observations, it should be remembered, is a very difficult task for most people. If teachers are required to do this, it is important to give considerable attention to such matters in the training... All the scientific methods described above are compatible with Montessori education*” (p. 42).

**Need more inspiration to conduct Montessori research?** “When she spoke of the child as the teacher rather than the taught, Montessori had in mind her own cognitive style as a researcher, which was to make intuitive conclusions from her observations” (Kramer, 1976, p. 365). When asked to sum up her educational philosophy, she did so in two words: “Attendere, osservando - watch and wait” (p. 365). Standing (1956) stated that “her research did, in fact, lead her in two directions: forward towards adolescence; and backward towards the newly born child” (p. 68). “The publication of certain research which he (Mario) and Dr. Montessori worked out together,” (p. 72). Adding “scientifically tested plan of cosmic education... has already proved itself to be the only path on which our feet can firmly tread in further educational research” (p. 366).

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Academic writing is the formal writing style used to write scholarly materials. There are many types of academic writing to present your work:

- Article layout: abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and references
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- Book report/review: short summary of book, background info about author and topic, and an evaluation of the content.
- Conference paper: abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusion, and acknowledgments.
- Essay: layout is generally main idea, evidence, conclusion.
- Literary criticism: comparison, analysis, interpretation/evaluation of works of literature.
- Synopsis of an experience/knowledge: intro, main points, reflections, changed my practice

#### Helpful hints if you would like to write a little more clearly and academically.

**Paragraphs:** 150 to 200 words per paragraph (never below 50 words) | Topic sentence — body (argument/detailed explanation) | Tokens — evidence, examples, supporting main argument | Final sentence — Sums up paragraph conclusion/signal implication of findings.

**Sentences:** Average of 20 words per sentence but with a variety of sentence lengths/structures | Use active verbs with real subjects | Keep the subject, verb, and object (SVO) close together and clearly linked | Qualifying clauses placed at the beginning or end of sentences.

**Does a paragraph or sentence do the BBC:** *Build* your argument, advance readers' understanding, strike right tone | *Blur* your argument, repeat material/waffle | *Corrode* text, include irrelevant/wrong material.

**Overall:** Use a formal tone (no slang, cliches) | Use precise language to convey meaning | Use third person point of view/facts rather than give advice | Research focus by answering a specific question | Organise info logically in a linear fashion using headings | Properly cite all sources/include reference section | Stand back and ask — Is this text attractive, involving, varied and interesting.

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