



## The US Air Force & Montessori Education

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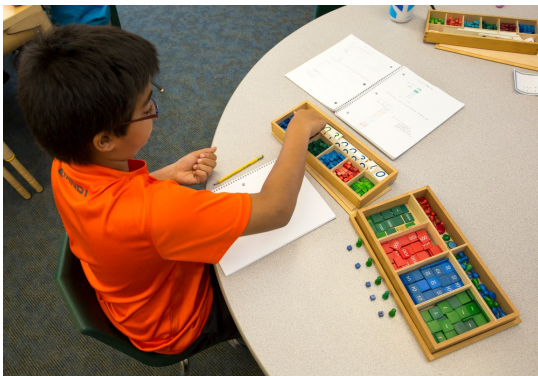
### Question:

What do the United States Air Force and Montessori Education have in common?

### Answer:

Both see people as unique individuals.

If the answer to this leaves you scratching your head just as much as the question, then I invite you to read a recent article in the *Harvard Ed. Magazine* titled *Beyond Average* by lecturer, Todd Rose. He shares the story of how in the 1950s the US Air Force found that few pilots were fitting into the standard cockpit of their planes that had been last redesigned in the 1920s. After measuring more than 4,000 pilots, they found there was no one design that would accommodate a wide range of body types – each pilot's profile was unique. When the plane manufacturer proposed a cockpit that used *average* dimensions, they found that rather than working for most pilots, it worked for none. There was no such thing as an average pilot body type – they were all unique. To solve the problem, they realized they needed a flexible design; one where, for example, the seat could move to accommodate people with shorter or longer legs or arms. Thus, the adjustable seat was born!



Like the Air Force, teachers at Shrewsbury Montessori School (SMS), understand that each individual is unique. We believe that all children deserve an education that “fits” them. We also know that if our educational practices are not flexible or are too standardized, no one will benefit. Some students learn better working alone at a table in a quiet place with few distractions, and others thrive working cooperatively while lying on the rug. Some students learn to read early and easily, but may need more time to consolidate math concepts, while other students have

just the opposite learning profile. It's important to point out that using different methods to teach children a skill (reading or math for example), does not mean that there is not a standard goal to be met. In fact, by adjusting the pilot's cockpit to fit their body, it enables them to fly the plane safely and consistently well. Equally, adjusting the learning environment for each child helps ensure they excel academically, socially and emotionally. The result is that SMS graduates continue on to attend an array of public and private middle, high schools and colleges, where their deep interests and higher level critical thinking skills propel them to assume leadership roles both in and outside the classroom.

Attend one of our Open Houses or schedule a tour to see our classrooms in action. We hope experiencing SMS first hand helps you understand what makes a Montessori education unique, but also how it is effective for all kinds of children and learners of all ages.

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