Is Montessori unstructured?

Montessori classrooms are very structured, ordered and carefully designed environments. Every item in the Montessori classroom has been selected to help the child to grow and develop according to his or her developmental needs. After a proper introduction to the ground rules and a few materials, the child is able to navigate the classroom independently and need not wait for a teacher for the opportunity to learn. The teacher is the dynamic link between the child and the materials. Many Montessori materials are “self-correcting,” and provide the child with the opportunity to problem solve and make their own discoveries. Because there can be 16 children in a classroom doing 16 different things, some observers may not see the structure—but without it, the calm, purposeful work we see children engaged in would not be possible. When children are engaged in activities that satisfy their inner need for growth, they display a demeanor of self-assurance, satisfaction and calm enjoyment. Children learn to take responsibility for themselves and their environment using materials with care, making them ready for a friend when they are done, and returning the work to the shelf.