Every year thousands of Montessori parents whose children are about to move up to kindergarten face a common dilemma: Do they keep their children in a Montessori environment or do they transfer their children to a more traditional kindergarten program. Here are ten reasons we think parents should stay in a Montessori environment and complete the three-year learning cycle:

1. The third year, the kindergarten year, is the time when many of the earlier lessons come together and become permanent part of the young child’s understanding. An excellent example is the early introduction to addition with large numbers through the Bank Game. When children leave Montessori before age five, many of the still forming concepts evaporate, just as a child living overseas will learn to speak two languages, but may quickly lose the second language if his family moves back home.

2. As a five year old, your child has many opportunities to teach the younger children lessons that he learned when he was their age. Research proves that this experience has powerful benefits for both tutor and tutoree.

3. The Primary Montessori curriculum is much more sophisticated than that found in most kindergartens.

4. Having spent two years together, your child’s teachers know her very, very well. They know her strengths and areas that are presenting challenges.

5. Five year olds have a real sense of running their classroom community.

6. Even in kindergarten, Montessori children are studying cultural geography and beginning to grow into global citizens.

7. In Montessori, your child has been treated with a deep respect as a unique individual. The school has been equally concerned for his intellectual, social, and emotional development.

8. Montessori schools are warm and supportive communities of students, teachers, and parents. Children can’t easily slip through the cracks.

9. Montessori is consciously designed to recognize and address different learning styles, helping students learn to study most effectively.

10. Montessori students develop self-discipline and an internal sense of purpose and motivation.

If you still have any doubt, spend a morning and an afternoon observing in the Montessori program and compare it with a kindergarten class in the other school you are considering. Sit quietly and take mental notes. The differences may be subtle, but most likely they will be significant. Then project your child into the future and ask yourself how the positive differences you observed in the Montessori classroom might help shape your child to become the teenager, and later the adult, you envisioned for your child’s future.

*Adapted from Tomorrow’s Child’s 25 Reasons to Keep Your Child In Montessori through the Kindergarten Year. Copyright by The Montessori Foundation. All rights reserved.*