

	Montessori	Reggio Emilia	Waldorf	Charlotte Mason
Academics	Montessori schools focus more on academics and emphasize work over play. In addition to math, language, and science, Montessori schools include two other academic areas: practical life and sensorial.	Reggio Emilia homeschools don't use a set curriculum because learning projects are entirely student led. Parents ask questions and listen to the child to see what sparks their interest, then use this knowledge to prepare the learning environment and support the child in choosing and completing his learning projects.	Waldorf schools delay formal academics. Formal instruction in math, science, and reading isn't given until age 7, when they are considered developmentally ready and interested.	Structured lessons should not begin until the child is six years old. Charlotte believed that we should give children living thoughts and ideas, not just dry facts. So all of her methods for teaching the various school subjects are built around that concept.
Curriculum	Montessori curriculum is individualized. Rather than giving group lessons, Montessori teachers give one-on-one lessons to each student depending on his specific level and needs. This is possible because the children largely work independently.	Reggio Emilia homeschools individualized, interest-led, interdisciplinary projects for learning. Children choose their own projects and work at their own pace.	Curriculum is individualized in Waldorf homeschools. Children's tasks are tailored to their learning styles and developmental needs, and they work at their own pace. Practical skills, including cooking, cleaning, and gardening and crafts such as woodworking and sewing are emphasized.	The Charlotte Mason method advocates the use of living books rather than dry textbooks. Living books are usually written in narrative or story form by one author who has a passion for his topic. A living book makes the subject "come alive." She encouraged spending time outdoors, interacting with God's creation firsthand and learning the living ways of nature.
Instruction	One-on-one instruction is a key element of a Montessori homeschool. Lessons are concise, direct and aimed at enhancing the child's self-worth. Individual didactic materials are always provided during instruction to allow children to learn at their own pace.	Parents do not impart knowledge through direct instruction. Instead, children are free to choose their own projects and work independently or in groups.	Instead of learning through direct instruction, children are free to roam around the classroom and choose their own activities and work, with parental guidance.	Charlotte Mason style lessons are short (5-15 minutes for young children up to 45 minutes or more for older children) and developmentally appropriate. Direct instruction is limited. Dictation exercises introduce and reinforce spelling and grammar concepts, while nature journals are used for nature studies.
Imaginative Play	Montessori homeschools prioritize work over play.	Imaginative play is a key component of Reggio homeschools in the early grades.	Waldorf homeschools are based on play up until age 7, when academics are introduced. They are especially focused on imaginative play.	Charlotte Mason emphasized outdoor play (at least 3 hours daily in all but very bad weather) over any other type of play, though that definitely includes imaginative play.
Technology	The Montessori method discourages the use of screens as either learning tools or diversions.	Reggio homeschools use plenty of technology, such as cameras and video recorders, to observe and document what takes place in the classroom. Screens as educational devices are not discouraged either.	Waldorf homeschools tend to use very little modern-day technology.	Charlotte Mason was an educator ahead of her time. She knew how to blend the innovative with the classical and traditional. Most proponents of this method embrace technology. If you wonder about a certain tech aspect, ask yourself "What would Charlotte do?"
Arts	Montessori schools focus less on the arts than other homeschooling methods: they rarely have time designated for the arts or assign art projects.	Reggio Emilia homeschools place great emphasis on the arts. They promote and encourage the use of many different artistic media and forms of expression. Arts and creative expression are often pursued independently of other subjects, in addition to being integrated within subjects.	In Waldorf schools, the arts are integrated into lessons and injected into the whole curriculum.	Charlotte Mason introduced the work of great artists and composers to her students and let them spend time with each, getting to know their works personally.

Environment	The "prepared environment" is designed with everything a child needs to explore and learn independently. It is bright and orderly and should include living things such as plants and pets, which the child learns to care for. Learning materials (specially designed didactic manipulatives for every period of childhood development) should be placed on low shelves within the child's reach, to entice him to want to learn and work.	Reggio Emilia homeschools are orderly and free of clutter. Natural light, quality materials and inviting, comfortable furnishings are critical for encouraging your child to work on their projects. Your child must be able to easily access what they need, to feel secure in using the space, and not need to stress about making messes.	A Waldorf environment is open and spacious to allow for creative playtime and lots of movement. The environment should feel warm, inviting and comforting, supporting the child's well-being by allowing them to feel relaxed and at ease so they can learn more effectively. Natural fibers and high-quality, wooden toys should be a priority.	Charlotte believed that parenting and the home environment make up one third of the child's education. She taught that the ideas that rule your life make up the atmosphere around you, meaning that the way children are treated is more essential to the atmosphere of your homeschool than the posters on the wall or the organization system you use.
Projects	Projects are occasionally used in Montessori homeschools, but they are not open ended or interest-led.	Long-term, open-ended projects are a big focus in Reggio homeschools. Projects are initiated by students and interest-led. Children are encouraged to explore investigate, and represent their real-world findings.	Waldorf homeschools may assign the occasional project when it fits with the subject being studied. Projects are not open ended nor interest-led.	Charlotte believed that students should make their own connections, so she probably wouldn't have encouraged interdisciplinary, unit-study style projects. However, many CM proponents use projects for learning within single subjects.
Materials	Didactic materials (didactic means designed to teach) —many invented by Maria Montessori—are a hallmark of the Montessori method, from simple learning tools for toddlers to more complex materials for advancing learners. These high quality (usually wooden) manipulatives are designed to provide the child with a clear-cut experience and gradually progress to more complicated tasks.	Children use many modes or languages to learn (these are called the "hundred languages"). This includes drawing, painting, music, dance, poetry, stories, and much more. They also use a wide range of materials to express themselves, such as paint, clay, and natural and recycled materials. Reggio kids are encouraged to express themselves in many different kinds of ways.	Pretend play is encouraged, so there are lots of toys, art materials, and games in the classroom. Kids spend lots of time playing indoors and outdoors. The aim is to promote imaginative learning, creativity, and social and emotional skills	Teach your children science then letting them naturally explore, observe, and discover in all of God's creations. Teach literature and history through living books.
Educational Emphasis	Uninterrupted work time is a primary focus of the Montessori method. Kids are given at least one three-hour uninterrupted period a day during which to work on their chosen tasks free of distractions.	The Reggio Emilia method emphasizes learning through projects based on the students interests. It also places great emphasis on expression, or what the founders called "the Hundred Languages of Children". Children are encouraged to express themselves in lots of different ways using a wide range of media (painting, sculpting, theater, music, etc...).	Waldorf education strives to combine education with life and not with the abstract accumulation of knowledge. In the primary grades the use of artistic elements in different forms (rhythm, movement, color, form, recitation, song, music) as a means to understand and relate to the world. The upper grades focus on building an understanding of what is true through observation, reflection and science experimentation.	In Charlotte Mason's own words, "Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life." The Charlotte Mason method is based on her belief that the child is a person first and that his whole person needs to be educated, not just his mind. Nature Study is another emphasis -- children should spend as much time as possible outdoors. Development of good habits and the cultivation of character is also emphasized.
Assessment (Testing)	Montessori homeschools provide autodidactic (children learn the skills by using the material) learning materials that allow children to assess themselves.	The goal of Reggio-inspired assessment is to make student learning and thinking visual. Educators observe and tell the story of the learning, or the process, rather than only displaying the finished artwork. Students are not tested.	No formal grades are assigned during the elementary years; instead children are assessed by progress made	Until the age of 10 or 11, a Charlotte Mason-style education uses narration as the primary method of evaluating a student. The goal is to teach a child to think and express themselves clearly.