

Bringing Montessori Home



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Dear Parent,

This booklet is designed to share information on how to bring Montessori home. Because toddler children are in a sensitive period for order, it is important that parents offer consistency in the experiences of the child from school to home. In the book *Montessori from the Start*, authors Paula Polk Lillard and Lynn Lillard Jessen, experienced Montessori trained guides and parents, write about the importance of **routines** for children. “By helping the child to know what will happen next, routine and ritual help her to build trust in the world and to feel secure in life.” (pg. 127)

While at school, the children practice independence and control and coordination of movement. This practice is often observed through work and play. In understanding the meaning of the term ‘work’, note that work is observed when the child is experiencing engagement and concentration while exploring use of a toy or other object.

Play is exploration with a toy and extends to the development of the imagination. What matters most is what goes on during work and play. Lillard and Jensen write, “What we are hoping to encourage at this age is a focused attention on some aspect of reality so that learning occurs.” (pg. 34) Both work and play offer the child to opportunity to develop concentration, fine motor muscles, eye-hand coordination, and independence. The adult must be observant of when periods of concentration occur, and careful not to intervene.

There are many activities which parents can do at home which support the work that the children are doing at school. The

booklet includes a list of sample activities. There are blank lines where you, as the parent or caregiver can list notes and other ideas for activities in the home.

Please read the booklet and list questions or obstacles as they occur. You may find that after adopting changes to the areas of routine, work and play, and daily activities, a positive transformation will occur in your toddler.

For further understanding and study, I suggest reading Montessori from the Start by Lillard and Jessen, as well as viewing the NAMTA video, Edison's Day.

I am available at the following addresses for further discussion and consultation:

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You have already made an excellent decision regarding understanding and supporting your child's development. Now you just must implement what you understand to be the optimal support for your toddler. You CAN do it!

Sincerely,

Deidre L. Brooks

Importance of a Daily Routine

Purpose: develop a routine which honors the children’s needs for order and independence with toileting

- Honors 2-hour nap schedule and 10-to-12-hour nighttime sleep
- Honors sitting on the toilet after each meal and after each sleep period (morning wake up and after nap)
- Honors the needs of the children for consistency

Must be the exact same for at least three days in a row! Monday through Friday is the ideal to strive for.

Notes or questions:

Review the following: Sample Morning Schedule. Can this schedule work for your children? Why or why not?

Time: Sample Routine

- 7:00 Children wake up
- Caregiver (CG): Be available for moderate help with undressing
- Children sit on the toilet
- 7:15 CG: Be available for moderate help with dressing
- 7:20 Activity: Children set the child-sized table
- Children help to prepare breakfast
- Examples include slicing apples, peeling bananas, scooping cereal, pouring milk
- 8:00 Eat together at the small table
- 8:15 Children put food away: scrape plate, put drinking glass away
- Children help with washing dishes: use learning tower
- 8:30 Children go to the toilet
- 8:45 Outdoor play
- 9:15 Play time ends. Children put toys away
- Children go to sink to wash hands
- 9:30 Children help to set the table for a snack
- Children help to prepare snack
- 10:00 Dine together at small table or outdoors on a blanket
- 10:15 Put dishes away
- Children use the toilet
- 10:30 Children continue outdoor play or choose indoor play

Guidelines for Work and Play

Purpose: develop a work style which honors order, independence with responsibility, and respect for toys and furniture.

- Honors order: there must be a place for everything (and everything in its place!)
- Honors independence: There must be a set of chairs and a table which are child-sized. There must be a shelf or shelves that the children can reach which offer toys for working and playing with.
- Honors respect for toys: child works with one toy at a time. Puts toy away when done.

Please list below any observations including perceived obstacles with independent work and play as suggested above.

Notes or questions:

Suggested Activities for home

Purpose: develop independence and self-reliance

- Honors respect for the child to be able to think, practice concentration, decision making, and safe exploration
- Honors independent movement and refinement of control and coordination of movement

Notes:

- ✚ Avoid hovering while a child is working and playing. There is a difference between hovering and collaborating. Hovering feels like the adult is planted beside the child and attached to the activity. Hovering becomes an obstacle to concentrating and absorbing what the child needs to absorb from the activity. A collaborative feels like the adult is floating about the room and gives a feeling of freedom for the child to concentrate and end the work when the child is ready to end it.
- ✚ Toileting and dining are natural activities for the child.
- ✚ Toileting and dining deserve the same collaborative experience for the child.
- ✚ Television watching is NOT an activity and should be avoided at all times. Television offers nothing for the child developmentally and

actually hampers development of language and the ability to concentrate.

Suggested Activities:

Indoors:

1. Help with laundry: children can transfer clothing from the hamper to the basket. Children can help load and unload the washer and the dryer. Use of a step stool may help reach the top loader styles. Children can help measure and pour the liquid soap into the washer and then to push the buttons for starting.
2. Crumb brush and tray: Children can use the crumb brush and tray to remove the crumbs from the table after dining.
3. Dust furniture, window ledges, and plant leaves.
4. Keep towels handy for wiping own spills.

Notes:

Outdoors:

1. Water plants
2. Sweep
3. Sponge and bucket for wiping trikes, wagons, etc.
4. Outdoor water source – for filling watering cans, buckets, etc.

Notes: _____
