



wBees Forest School- Montessori in the Home Guide

Adapted with Permission by the Montessori School of Tokyo

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Montessori in the Home

Early childhood is the most important period of their life when children begin to set the foundation for their development. The building blocks are being set up for their cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and personal development, along with the formation of their interests, identity, and personality.

Consistency and routine are two of the most important fundamentals for creating a successful and smooth learning environment for your child.

Our hope is to provide families with ideas, resources, and academic and social-emotional guidance to help you and your child during this journey. We've created this resource as a guide to set up your space and tone within the home to whatever extent feels right for your family.

Every family's situation and dynamic is unique. Every child is unique. Our philosophy and perspective is that every child at wBees should have enjoyable, meaningful, and rewarding experiences, whether that be through formal or informal learning and interactions both in school and the home.

Our goal is to work in collaboration with families to keep alive the culture of learning that is unique to Montessori and provide families with support and activities that match our school culture and curriculum.

Learning together with a sense of exploration, curiosity, and discovery results in deeper and more meaningful experiences for children. This instills a great sense of ownership and responsibility for the child. Above all, we want children to feel connected to their learning, not simply "complete assignments." We hope this resource can spark some ideas and allows for you to be creative in however you choose to set up your child's home-learning environment.

With peace and love,
wBees Forest School

Montessori Quotes to Set the Tone...

- *“One test of the correctness of educational procedure is the happiness of the child.”*
- *“Joy, feeling one's own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul.”*
- *“As we observe children, we see the vitality of their spirit, the maximum effort put forth in all they do, the intuition, attention and focus they bring to all life's events, and the sheer joy they experience in living.”*
- *“It is necessary that the child teach himself, and then the success is great.”*
- *“The teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.” —The Absorbent Mind*
- *“The instructions of the teacher consist then merely in a hint, a touch—enough to give a start to the child. The rest develops of itself.” —Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*
- *“... the task of the educator lies in seeing that the child does not confound good with immobility, and evil with activity, as often happens in old-time discipline.”*



The Prepared Environment



“A place for everything and everything in its place” is one of the critical principles of Montessori at home. Having a place for everything, on a child-friendly scale, means that children know where to find what they need and have a place to put things when they’re done. This is an essential tool in teaching them to be responsible for their belongings. External order gives the children internal order and security. An ordered environment also has fewer distractions, allowing children to focus on the task at hand.

Your child’s learning environment is your home and surroundings. While thinking of how to curate and set up your child’s home-learning environment, we strongly encourage families to think about how their home can facilitate independence and invite exploration. Have a place in each room for your child’s carefully chosen belongings; for example, by the front door, have a stool to sit on and a place to hang coats and keep shoes. In the living room, have a place for your child’s books, toys, and any works/activities you make for them. Create some space in each room to set your child up for success in independence. Some ideas below:

- Store clothing in low drawers or baskets, as well as move the rod in the closet down to eye level so your child can reach their clothing.
- Place step stools in both the kitchen and bathroom to enable them to wash their hands and, in the case of the kitchen, help with meal preparation.
- Place toys, games, and art supplies on low shelves where your child can easily access them, then separate these toys into various baskets, bins, or shelves so the items stay separate and are easy to find without sifting through piles of other toys.
- Store healthy snacks down low in your refrigerator or pantry, so your child can help themselves.
- Keep beverages in small pitchers located on the lower shelf in the fridge, with child-friendly cups nearby. When your child is thirsty, allow them to help themselves — just be sure to keep a sponge/ some rags nearby, so they can clean up any messes they make.
- Don't put out too many toys and books at one time. Those being used by your child at the moment are sufficient. Rotating is a good idea – taking out those books and toys that have not been chosen lately and removing them to storage for a time. Children grow and change and they need help to keep their environment uncluttered and peaceful.

Practical Life

Care of Environment

Practical life is an important part of experiential learning. It is part of every Montessori classroom and can be mirrored at home. These activities assist children in developing purposeful life skills for their continued growth and development. When children engage and practice care of self and environment skills, they are refining their order, concentration, coordination, and independence, as well as planning and problem-solving skills.

The Practical Life area also provides children with opportunities to contribute to family life. Most children love to participate and help with housekeeping tasks.

Inherent in Care of Environment activities is the development of key executive functions: decision-making, organization, problem-solving, negotiation, collaboration, and communication.

Examples of practical life might include:

- setting the table and clearing the table
- preparing a snack/meal
- pouring water
- helping with shopping lists
- tidying and organizing rooms
- planning an outing
- taking care of pets
- loading /unloading the washing machine and dryer
- folding laundry and socks
- unloading the dishwasher
- helping with recycling
- flower arranging
- care of plants: watering, leaf polishing, replanting, picking dead leaves out
- dusting
- vacuuming
- sweeping
- polishing wood, glass or silver



- squeegeeing shower door or glass door
- cleaning windows
- scrubbing chairs and tables with a brush and soap
- and looking for ways to recycle, reduce, reuse
- fixing things in the house

Being in a Montessori school is often described by students as being part of a big family. All of the aspects detailed above result in a feeling of belonging to a community, and with that, we learn that there is a responsibility to ourselves, others, and the environment.

Practical life engages children at all stages of development, and tasks are designed according to their level of coordination and independence. You can organize a job chart or list of family projects as a way to help guide your child's interests. Planning and gathering resources to complete the tasks is purposeful work. These ideas foster a sense of contribution, responsibility, shared experiences, and satisfaction. As children grow older, many of these practical life experiences are the foundation of their sense of belonging and responsibility.



Daily Flow

Establishing a routine that works for your family is a helpful first step to creating a successful learning environment at home. Children thrive with consistency and when they know what to expect. By establishing a predictable Daily Flow to your days, you are providing your child a sense of security, groundedness, and control within this new home-school-work life. Please note that when we talk about Daily Flow, we are not talking about exact minutes and hours. Simply a predictable pattern you follow at your own rhythm.

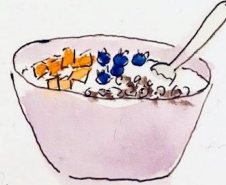
We encourage families to make their own adult version of the Daily Flow to make sure each adult is taking time to practice self-care and self-love. We are better able to support and guide our children when our bodies, minds, and spirit are nourished.

Please see below two beautiful sets of cards that you may use for your Daily Flow or as an inspiration to create your own. Our own Sara Hodges (2019-2020 Seedlings teacher) created the first set, and the second set comes from Simone Davies, The Montessori Toddler.

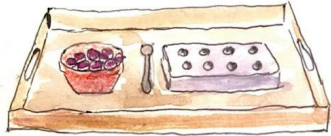
Example of a Daily Flow, use the picture cards provided to create the flow that works best for your family.

Morning	Wake up and assist in making bed. Use the bathroom, brush teeth, get dressed. Make breakfast with your child, eat and clean up. Care of Environment: care of plants, invite your child to organize home environment as needed. Rotate through independent exploration and guided activities one at a time for an hour and a half. Have a few choices of activities for children to choose from.
Mid-Morning	Snack Break: children can help prep the snack, set the table, eat, and clean up.
Late Morning	Work time (indoor or outdoor) for an hour. This could be a longer art, science or cooking project. Read stories, sing songs, listen to music or a singalong.
Mid-Day	Set up for lunch and have lunch. Outside play time if the weather is appropriate, for at least 30 minutes.
Afternoon to Evening	Preparing for nap time, rest and wind down. Listen to music and look at books. Free play / Movement / Dance Care of Environment and Self: Dinner / Bath / Bed

Flow of the Day



breakfast



work



circle



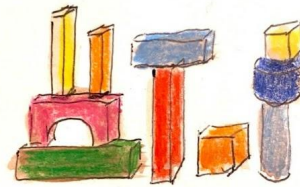
outside



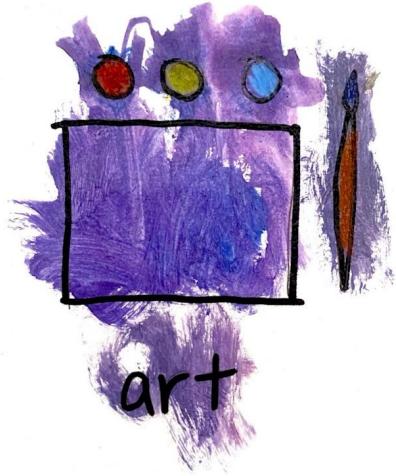
lunch



nap



play



Print out and use these cards like a checklist to guide your child with their morning/evening routine.

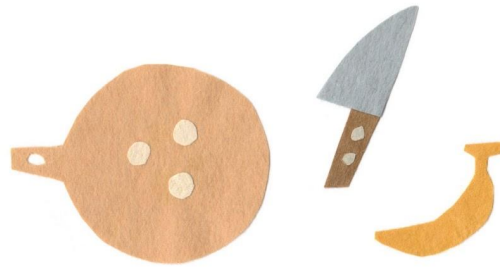
You can help your child place the cards in the order they'd like and tape them up on the wall.

By using these cards with your child:

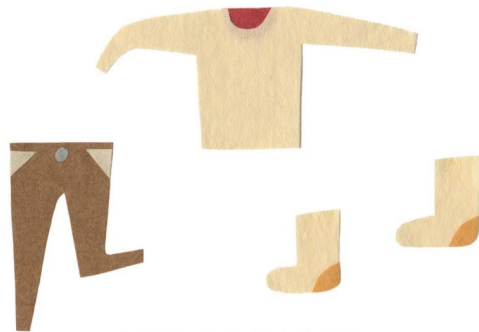
1. Your child is involved in the process, so they share the responsibility for the morning/evening routine.
2. They can refer to the cards to see what they need to do next.
3. No more nagging from us. We can simply say, "What do the cards say is next?"



MAKE BED



EAT BREAKFAST

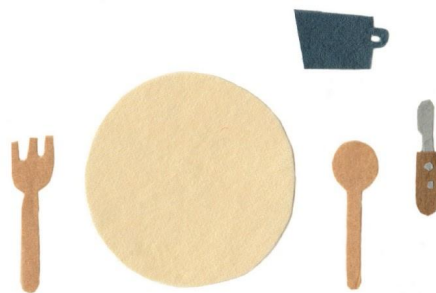


GET DRESSED





SHOES/COAT ON



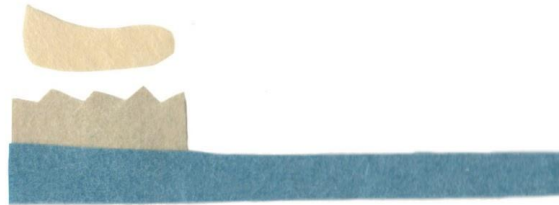
EAT DINNER



BATH



PAJAMAS ON



BRUSH TEETH



DRINK WATER



USE TOILET / CHANGE DIAPER



STORY TIME



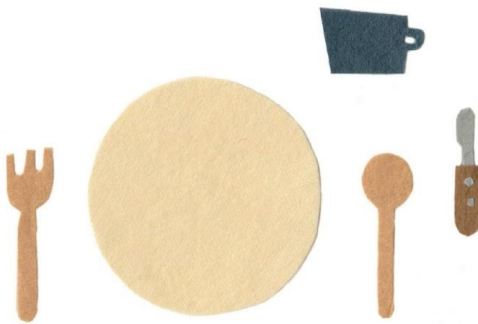
CUDDLES



SLEEP TIME



SHOES/COAT ON



EAT DINNER

Setting Up The Works

When planning what works or activities to put out for your child, take into consideration two things: the developmental needs and characteristics of your child and their interests. When possible, give your child a choice, contain your works and activities in baskets, trays, or containers, and present it as beautifully and orderly as possible. Before putting works out on a shelf or activity area, make sure to set your child up for success by giving them a clear message regarding the purpose and intention of the works (although exploration is also encouraged!)



Toddlers!



Toddler Program

Below we will share some guidelines for parents as well as some activities for your toddler

Thoughts for parents:

- Take care of yourself too! Parenting a toddler is no easy feat. You're doing great!
- Remain mindful and respectful about the growing self-esteem and sense of independence that your child is developing.
- Help your child with the hardest part of a task (not the whole task).
- Initiate verbal communication frequently, ask questions, and share observations.
- Be consistent; follow routines and provide clear sequences for activities.
- Limit screen time when possible.
- Include your child in household chores.
- Provide opportunities for outdoor activities (gross motor skill development).
- Let go of perfection.
- Enjoy and appreciate time with your child.

Activities for Toddlers at Home

PRACTICAL LIFE

Food Preparation

- Preparing their own snacks and helping with meals: cutting half of an apple (cut horizontally) using an apple slicer, squeezing orange juice, spreading cream cheese or jam on half of a bagel or bread, slice a banana, scoop avocados, mash potatoes, whisk eggs.
- Slicing vegetables and fruit for snacks and dinner.
- Follow child-friendly recipes.
- Baking: have ingredients pre-measured and in jars.

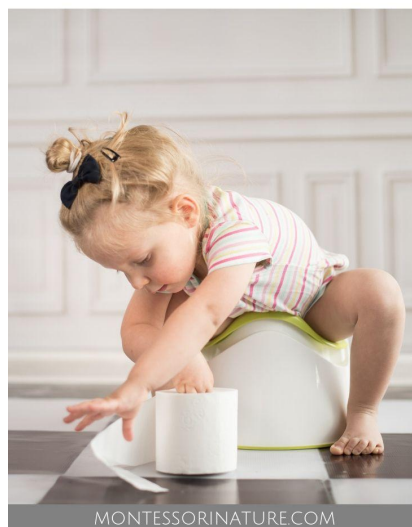


Care of Self

- Toileting
- Dressing and Undressing: give your child enough time to practice dressing and undressing by themselves
- Wash Hands
- Blow or wipe nose
- Brush teeth
- Wash face



TOILET LEARNING THE
MONTESSORI WAY



Fine Motor

Transfer works

Have your child transfer water or small objects using their fingers or tools such as small pitchers, sponges, spoons, scoopers, and tongs. To extend this work you may add the element of sorting the objects by a single attribute such as color or shape.





ART WORK

Vary the mediums you expose your child to, as new elements come in, you maintain their point of interest alive! Don't use it all in one day! Some ideas: oil pastels, soft pastels, chalk, markers, crayons, tempera sticks, playdough, liquid glue, glue sticks, stickers, cardstock paper, tracing paper, newspaper, cellophane, bubble wrap, cardboard, wixi sticks, paint brushes, paint stamps, rubber stamps, ink pads, watercolors, food coloring, dot paint.





1. Oil pastels and paper
2. Sewing around the shape
3. Color pencils and paper
4. Tempera paint and sponge brushes
5. Playdough with tools
6. Charcoal and white paper
7. Watercolors, water bowl, brush, and watercolor paper
8. Stamps and ink pads on paper
9. Pastel tempera sticks over black paper
10. Tape cutting to design on paper
11. Holepuncher, liquid glue, brush, and paper
12. Stickers to make a design on paper

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- It is always fun for children to spend time with their parents in nature, whatever that might look like in your NY lifestyle. We encourage families to take some time out of their busy schedules to explore the outdoors with your child. This experience will be beneficial and enjoyable for both of you! Here are a few ideas for connecting your child to nature.
 - Watch the clouds and see what animals you can make out of them.
 - Hug some trees and try to find one that your arms fit perfectly around.
 - Turn over a rock and see what is hiding underneath.
 - Do a backyard/nature treasure hunt.
 - Try your hand at rock stacking.
 - Grab some leaves or pieces of bark and float them in a puddle or paint on them with water and your finger or paintbrush.
 - Go for a walk and make note of all the sounds you hear.
 - Find a nature trail and help children make up a game or collect bugs or leaves. The Jamaica Wildlife Refuge, Forest Park, and Highland Park are good options.
 - Pack some food and have a picnic in your backyard or at the park.

LANGUAGE

- Naming things in both indoor and outdoor environments.
- Read together! Read, read, read! Let your child choose the books, talk about how the characters might be feeling, and wonder together what will happen next. Reading with your child teaches more than literacy and language skills. Your child is learning that you value their interests and choices and that you love them and enjoy being close to them.
- Singing songs and doing finger-plays
- Narrate what you do as you go through your daily routines.
- This helps your child connect words with objects and actions. "I'm washing the dishes. I'm squeezing the yellow dish soap into the warm water."

All these activities will help limit screen time but also understand that there are ways to build in time for screen time to help families get a break. There are some resources out there that are some good options for screen time: Audible children's books are free, Epic Books, Mo Willems Lunch Doodles, Go Noodles movement time, and Cosmic Kids Yoga.

Primary Program

PARENTS ARE INVITED TO:

- Support your child's independence in daily life activities.
- Be mindful of and allow children to continue periods of purposeful work and concentration.
- Establish daily routines and expectations.
- Provide opportunities for daily physical activity and fresh air.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- Children aged 3 to 6 thrive in environments that promote repetition, routine, and the mastery of purposeful movement.
- Allow your child to choose activities and give them the opportunity for periods of time without distractions.
- The key to a successful learning environment is order, access to tactile resources, space to explore, and meaningful activity. For the Primary child, work and play should be interchangeable—a natural, fun, and exciting part of life.

PRACTICAL LIFE / FOOD PREPARATION

Depending on your child's fine motor skills they can help SO much with preparing a meal. If you truly give them a task and allow room for imperfection, they will most likely enjoy it and want to repeat it. We already gave some ideas of how children can help in the home, below are some more detailed ideas.

- Meal or Snack Preparation: slicing vegetables, fruit, and cheese, washing vegetables, scrubbing root vegetables, cutting garnish, and squeezing juices out of fruits.
- Baking: measuring and mixing ingredients.
- Kitchen Care: loading and unloading the dishwasher, sorting and putting away silverware, washing dishes by hand, sweeping floors.





ART

- Expose your child to different mediums, as mentioned in the Toddler section.
- Cutting and gluing - for example, find and cut all of the plants in a magazine; glue into a collage.
- Sewing shapes/pictures onto napkins, hand/kitchen towels, etc.
- Cutting through lined paper to follow different line patterns.
- Marble painting: squirt paint onto a paper on a tray and paint with marbles as you move the tray from side to side.
- Sewing: practice threading a needle, sewing a button to fabric, making a small bag, sewing words or initials on napkins, hand towels, etc.
- Origami
- Collage using magazine cutouts, leaves, recyclable materials, etc

SENSORIAL

- Exploring the home for 2-dimensional shapes (rectangles, squares, circles, etc.).
- Exploring the home for 3-dimensional shapes (spheres, cylinders, cones, cubes, prisms).
- Explore the home for textures that are rough or smooth.
- Exploring sound by tapping on different objects (pot, glass, wooden cutting board, etc.) with different objects as well (tap with a metal spoon, then a wooden spoon).
- Exploring spices and attempting to recognize them by scent.
- Comparing the various shapes of leaves found amongst the house plants.
- Drawing a picture that includes certain shapes, i.e., one circle and three rectangles, or one square and four triangles).
- Sorting objects by attributes: color, size, texture, shape, etc.



LANGUAGE

- Sound Games/I-spy: Something that begins with the sound /s/ or: Can you find something in the house that starts with the sound /m/
- Read together and have conversations using who/what/when/where/why questions.
- Singing new songs (in different languages).
- Tracing shapes, and letters in flour (pour flour on a cookie sheet).
- Write a letter to a friend or family member to mail.
- Assist in writing a list of things to do for a day or a week.
- Write a story or a play and read aloud or act out when finished.
- Play guessing games or charades.



MATH

- Scavenger hunt/counting objects collected.
- Counting objects (beans, pennies, etc.).
- Make numeral cards and have your child match the quantity of objects to the numeral.
- Number Booklet: Make a booklet using paper and a stapler, mark each page with a number, and then have your child stamp/draw/or use the corresponding amount of stickers to match the numerals on each page.
- Hopscotch math—all operations can be done, just make your hopscotch go higher than 10.

CULTURAL / SCIENCE

- Choose a topic you and your child feel excited about, then look for books, resources and activities you can do together or set your child up with to learn more about this topic. (Please see our unit of Study of Spring, Plants, and Flowers further down in this document).
- Sort things by living and nonliving.
- Sort animals by land/air/water.
- Sink and Float: fill up a deep container or sink and collect objects around your house (including fruits and vegetables!). Then predict and verify if they sink or float.
- Using food coloring and glass jars, mix primary colors to make green, orange, and purple!
- Grate a bar of soap and whisk in a bowl with water to make bubbles!

SINK AND FLOAT EXAMPLE





PEACE

- Practice breathing with your child. If possible, set the mood by using a candle, maybe some soothing music, and simply sit or lay down to practice deep breathing for a minute or two.
- Silence game: using a timer, ideally a sand timer, sit with your child to make silence for a minute or two (make it longer if you see your child will be able to and enjoy this). Simply make silence, and you can talk about anything you felt or heard after the time is up.
- Role model being a peacemaker. Use kind words and actions. Apologize to your family members when needed.
- Write or draw messages of love and peace for neighbors, family members, and friends. You can tape them on your windows or neighbors' doors, deliver them to family/friends, or give them to someone that works in your local supermarket, deli, or drug store or hand it to a delivery person/mail person.
- Walking on the Line: make a masking tape line throughout the house and walk carefully on the line.



MULTI STEP WORKS

- Baby washing or animal washing!
- Chair scrubbing.
- Bubble making.



SENSORY BINS

A **sensory bin** is typically a plastic tub or a large container of some sort filled with materials and objects carefully selected to stimulate the senses. A **sensory bin** can be filled with various materials such as water, natural objects, sand, beans, packaging materials, and more. Make sure to include small containers and tools for scooping and pouring!







IDEAS FOR A PLANTS AND FLOWERS UNIT



Start by talking about the parts of a plant.

What makes plants grow and be alive?

Explore the plants in your home, notice their different parts, and how they are similar or different from each other.

Plant seeds and watch them grow!

Talk about and explore real edible plants. We eat flowers, seeds, stems, leaves, and roots!

Experiment by adding food coloring to white carnations. See them change color!

Explore the seeds in fruits, collect seeds, and make art with them.

What is pollen? Explain pollination by using two lilies and a pretend bee. Lilies are fragrant and colorful, and have big anthers with pollen.

Buy flowers, dissect them, notice their different parts, see if you can find the seeds, and notice their smell.

Plant seeds in different jars, experiment by leaving one essential element out of each jar and its care (either water, dirt, or sun), and have one jar that gets all the elements. Children will see how only one will grow!

Make art using leaves, flowers, and seeds!

Press flowers and leaves in books and make a sun catcher using contact paper.

Dye a shirt or towel using food, spices, and flowers!

<https://www.playfullearning.net/resource/all-natural-tie-dye-diy/>



Resources for Families

Montessori Printables

- <https://www.trilliummontessori.org/join-library/https://livingmontessorinow.com/>
- <https://mymontessorihub.com/>
- <https://www.trilliummontessori.org/join-library/>
- <https://hiphomeschoolmoms.com/the-ultimate-homeschool-guide-to-free-montessori-resources/>

Sensory Bin Ideas

- <https://busytoddler.com/2016/04/sensory-bin-basics/>
- <https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/all-about-sensory-bins-5-things-need-know/>
- <https://www.trilliummontessori.org/join-library/>

More Resources

- [List of Montessori online courses and webinars](#) compiled by I Believe in Montessori
- [Sensory Learning Ideas](#) by Special Education and Inclusive Learning
- [12 Youtube Channels](#) to Get Kids Moving

Podcasts for Children

- The Big Life Kids Podcast
- Wow in the World
- Forever Ago
- But Why: A podcast for curious kids
- Pants on Fire
- Tumble
- Circle Round
- Reading Bug Adventures
- Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls
- The Purple Rocket Podcast
- Fierce Girls
- The Past and The Curious: A History Podcast for Kids and Families
- Sparkle Stories
- Earth Rangers
- Myths and Legends
- Peace Out
- Story Time
- What if World
- Brains On!
- Short & Curly
- Classic Kids
- The Alien Adventures of Finn Caspian

“It is not enough for the teacher to love the child. She must first love and understand the universe. She must prepare herself and truly work at it.”

- Dr Maria Montessori

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