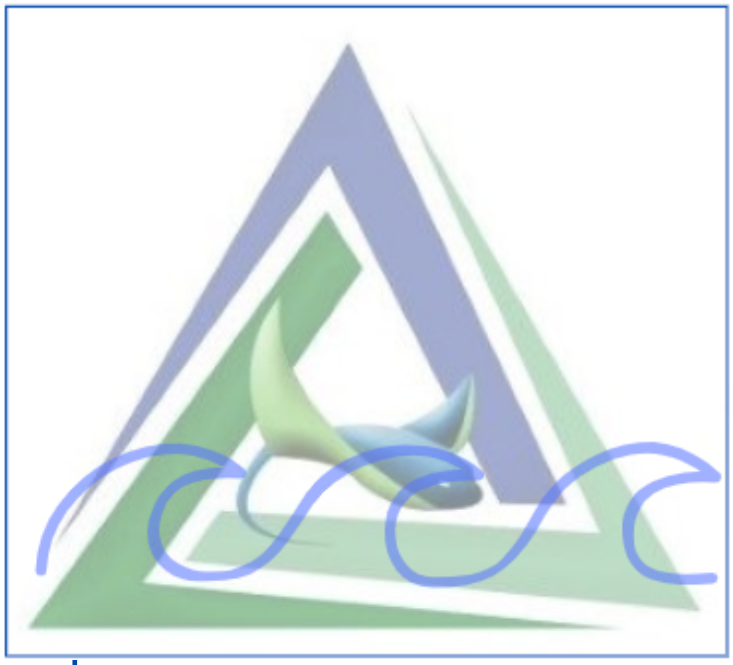
STERLING MONTESSORI
EST. 1997

DISTANCE LEARNING HANDBOOK CHILDREN'S HOUSE V2



Go With the Waves

Life is not always going to go as you had planned - tides changes and things go in different directions. You can't stop the waves from happening, but you can learn to move with them. They may not take you in the direction that you had planned, but they will take you exactly where you need to be.

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A VISION OF LEARNING

"Our aim is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core." ~Dr Maria Montessori



At Sterling Montessori, we are proud to deliver a well-rounded, Montessori education as we fulfill our mission. We are also proud that we will continue to be able to do so for the rest of the 2020/21 school year. We are committed to providing an alternative means of education in the form of Distance Learning. While Distance Learning cannot replicate onsite learning, our teachers can deliver powerful instruction that allows students to meet expected standards in an online environment. Our aim is to create a Montessori-based framework that serves our students, while supporting parents as we all adapt to a different daily routine. It is important to us that the children's activity during this time be enjoyable, thoughtful, challenging and rewarding.

Replicating what happens in our classrooms is not something we can achieve during this period. Our goal is to work in collaboration with families in order to keep alive the culture of learning that is unique to Montessori and provide families with support and activities that match the developmental needs and characteristics of their child.

Our Goals for Distance Learning



1. ACADEMIC GROWTH: *All* children will learn, grow and progress academically while away from campus

2. SUPPORT A STRONG FAMILY SYSTEM: Families will be provided with the right level of guidance, enough to keep children engaged and learning independently, but not too much that it feels overwhelming and unmanageable.

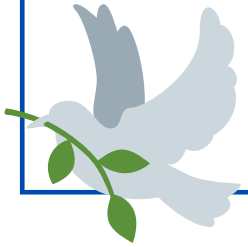




3. CREATE A CLASSROOM COMMUNITY: Teachers will create a classroom atmosphere that supports each student's social, emotional and academic growth.

4. FACILITATE COMMUNITY WELL-BEING: To provide opportunities for all of our children, families and staff to come together as a community to support and love one another throughout the remote learning year.

5. GRACE AND COURTESY: One of the main goals of a Montessori education is to prepare students to be contributing and valued members of society. This starts with lessons of Grace and Courtesy which are key to modeling peace, learning how to act in social situations and showing respect for one another. These are tools our children will use their entire lives! Helping children accomplish these main goals begins with the adults in their lives modeling what Grace and Courtesy looks like when we interact with each other and with our environments.



Remember they are learning from US!

ESTABLISHING AT HOME

The Montessori method is all about ***the process***. While completion of work is important, it is our approach that makes all the difference. Learning is most effective when we connect subjects with larger concepts or ideas. This helps to make learning meaningful, fueling motivation in students. Above all, we want children to feel connected to their learning, not simply “complete assignments” while at home.

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.



It is important to us that we all have a feeling of connectedness throughout this process. We will be in regular contact in a variety of ways and continued communication between teachers and families throughout the period of Distance Learning is assured. The guidelines throughout this Handbook will outline how Sterling Montessori teachers and administration will support our families throughout this period of Distance Learning.

The Prepared Environment

For our younger students, the learning environment is your home and surroundings. This means finding ways to include your child in meaningful tasks as well as encourage independence. In addition, establishing a quiet space and consistent routines will be essential to supporting the specific assignments shared by teachers.

Where age-appropriate you might like to discuss Distance Learning with your child and include them in some decision-making processes:



- Ask them where to set up their space (if applicable)
- Make a schedule together that works for your family (when to take breaks / have time outdoors etc.)
- Gather ideas for activities and projects
- Organize materials

It will be important for your child to maintain their routine of submitting their work to **SeeSaw** for their teacher to evaluate and give feedback.

STERLING TIP:

Easy Ways to Use Montessori At Home: This article (found in the Resource section) highlights some key Montessori principles you can incorporate in your home. Even small changes in your normal routine can help bridge the gap between your child's typical home and school environment.

Practical Life

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 students in developing purposeful life skills for the children's continued growth and development. This includes refining fine motor and movement skills and practicing coordination, planning and problem-solving. Practical life activities:

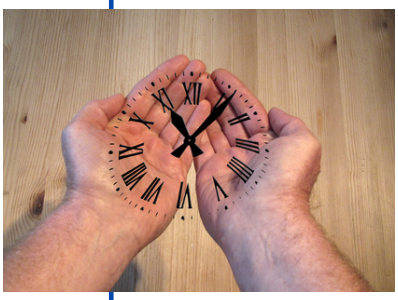
- foster order and sequence
- develop concentration
- foster physical independence
- foster the development of fine motor control
- provide opportunities for planning and carrying out tasks

The Practical Life area also provides children with opportunities to contribute to family life. Inherent in these activities is the development of key executive functions: decision making, organization, problem-solving, impulse control, collaboration and communication. These skills form the foundation of a child's academic learning. For example, sequencing a task is a pre-reading skill. Examples of practical life might include:

- setting the table
- watering plants
- tidying and organizing rooms
- planning an outing
- taking care of pets
- preparing a snack/meal
- doing laundry or ironing (find those cloth napkins you have been meaning to iron!)
- helping with shopping lists
- repairing a bicycle, dripping sink
- planting a small urban garden

Practical Life is engaging for children at all stages of development and tasks are designed according to their level of coordination and independence. You can organize a "job chart" (see sample in Resource section) 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 our children get older, these activities lead naturally to volunteer experiences and beginnings of community work. For our oldest adolescents, many of these practical life experiences are the foundation of their sense of belonging and personal vision. *(For more information on Practical Life in the Home, see article in our Resources section).*

The Uninterrupted Work Cycle



Establishing a routine that works for your family is an essential first step to creating a successful learning environment at home. Children will need time to get used to a consistent routine. In a Montessori classroom, children are given large blocks of time in order to explore their work deeply. This contributes directly to the development of concentration and provides opportunities to collaborate and problem-solve. It is the framework that fosters child-centered, as opposed to teacher-directed, learning.



Grace & Courtesy

We know that every family will manage in-home learning differently. Each family has its own unique balance of work and parenting schedules. Each family will need to juggle laptops, tablets, and phones across many family members in a new way. We're counting on our Montessori grace and courtesy more than ever as we adapt to a different daily routine.

As you prepare your environment to support your remote learner, it will be important for you to establish some grace and courtesy ground rules.



- **"One work at a time"** – You can choose from the variety of materials, but you can only choose ONE at a time. You can carefully take the tray with its materials anywhere in the room or house to work (except on the shelves themselves, which would deny other children easy access to the other materials). Once the child is finished, he/she carefully brings it back to its original spot.
- **"Go slowly"** – while walking into the room, while taking a tray to your spot, and doing the work without rushing – all help maintain a mode of concentration and purpose in our actions.
- **"Keep the room tidy"** – Each child has an apron and wash rag, and at the beginning and end of each school day, they do things like dust the shelves, push in their chairs, throw away scrap papers, empty out the wash basin used for washing hands, bring the snack dishes into the kitchen, and water the plants.
- **"Quiet Voices"**– This rule is a constant struggle but a necessity to create a courteous and productive work environment. It is a good idea to come up with new games or activities to help children become sensitive to volume.
- **"Be Gentle"** – with how they handle the materials, with how they speak to their siblings and with how they care for the plants and animals they interact with.
- **"Use your words"** – Tantrums and issues with personal space are real challenges with younger children, but growing in grace and courtesy will make a difference. Insist that your children use their words to express their feelings in a clear and calm manner. Role playing activities are very useful for teaching these lessons.

Grace & Courtesy

Below you will see some of the Grace and Courtesy expectations that will be presented and reviewed as we work with the students throughout the remote learning process. We will provide parents with some Zoom and SeeSaw training to help prepare you for the start of school.

Examples of Remote Learning:
Grace and Courtesy Presentations

How to...

- Arriving on Time
- Creating a designated workspace (proper lighting, sitting up, etc.)
- Preparing for the day
- How to get on Zoom; mute your microphone
- How to greet your teacher and classmates (unmute)
- Maintain proper Zoom etiquette (coming in late, mute, attire that promotes an atmosphere of work)
- How to get help during the work cycle
- Leaving Zoom meetings
- How to ask for help from a teacher



Ownership of Tasks & Sharing of Learning

Montessori learning environments are often referred to as "***optimal learning environments***" because of the inherent skills and outcomes that result from being in a rich and interesting classroom, coupled with the dynamic of interactions amongst peers and teachers.

In order to foster a deep sense of ownership in their learning, we focus on two things: the developmental needs and characteristics of the child and their interests. Here are a few key points that aid in cultivating a child's self-direction and attention to their work:



- Choice
- Participation in planning and organizing tasks
- Conversation
- Finding good resources
- Sharing of knowledge

You will be receiving regular communications from your child's classroom teachers in the coming weeks. We encourage parents to follow the teachers' suggestions and guidance when completing work at home. The more children are involved in developing and detailing their activities, the more they can achieve.

One note regarding sharing or presenting work: Sharing is an important weekly activity that gives children an opportunity to express feelings, opinions and practice public speaking. In the classroom show and tell will take place during group time. This is something you can replicate at home. Planning a sharing time at the end of the day or at the end of a project is very exciting for children and gives them an opportunity to use their voice. It is an essential part of the learning process as it requires synthesis of learning to describe, explain and express yourself clearly. It feels celebratory as well!



Responsibility & Contribution to Community & Family

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. It is our commitment to each child at Sterling Montessori that they reach their fullest potential and feel that they are a valued part of our community.

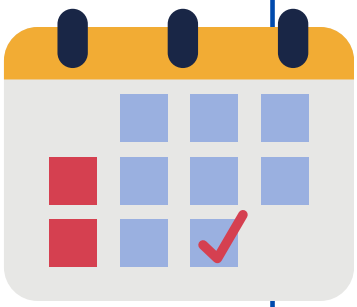


CHILDREN'S HOUSE DISTANCE LEARNING

Schedule

The Children's House curriculum has a common thread running throughout that provides many opportunities for the child to learn by exploration, using all their senses. Maria Montessori referred to a child in this first Plane of Development as having an "absorbent mind". This learning experience for primary students will depend upon ***a strong partnership with parents*****. <u>The distance learning experience will include a set of homemade Montessori materials that families will purchase from the school, and will be used at home with the guidance of your teacher during their class lessons.</u>** When possible it will also include the use of concrete materials from the home, the home's outdoor environment, and extensions of the Montessori materials with printables.

Students are expected to engage in remote learning **every day** on an adapted schedule that mirrors the flow of their regular school day. For instance, it's unlikely that young Children's House students could sustain a three-hour continuous work cycle at home and we encourage parents to extend activities throughout the day with many breaks in between. It is important to keep in mind that the quality of this experience is most closely associated with how deeply the child is connecting to the experience. This level of engagement need not take a lot of time; it does, however, take care and intent and we are here to support you with this.



In the Resource section you will find a suggested home schedule for parents to adapt and use at home. You will see that there is a scheduled morning work cycle with afternoons free for our students to complete assignments and for teachers to meet with students individually, if needed. During this work cycle your child will attend one session with their assigned group. Once their group lesson session expires you will be able to build in time for your child to complete assignments, go outside, have quiet time, complete chores or work on a project.

CHILDREN'S HOUSE DISTANCE LEARNING

Sample Children's House Schedule

CHILDREN'S HOUSE KINDERGARTEN LEAD SCHEDULE Arrange class into 3 different groups which will remain mostly stable					
2020-2021	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Friday
8:30-9	**Morning Meeting Attendance ALL**	**Morning Meeting Attendance ALL**	**Morning Meeting Attendance ALL**	**Morning Meeting Attendance ALL**	**Morning Meeting Attendance ALL**
9:00 - 10:00	**Group 1**	**Group 1**	**Group 1**	**Group 1**	**Group 1**
10:10 - 11:10	**Group 2**	**Group 2**	**Group 2**	**Group 2**	**Group 2**
11:20 - 12:20	**Group 3**	**Group 3**	**Group 3**	**Group 3**	**Group 3**
12:30 - 1:00	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1:00 - 1:30	**Independent Afternoon Work Cycle**				
1:40 - 2:10					
2:20 - 2:50					
3:00 - 4:00	Prep Time	Student Parent Support	Student Parent Support	Prep Time	Prep Time

****Music/PE will be scheduled once a week and will be reflected in your individual class schedule.****

Our Commitment to Distance Learning & Communication

Our Commitment...

Under the guidance of the American Academy of Pediatrics & the Office of Educational Technology (specifically for early learners) our Distance Learning schedule meets the developmental expectations of a Kindergartener.

- Remote Learning will take place Monday - Friday
- No more than 6 children in each group (18 Kindergarten students in a class)
- SeeSaw application will be used for classroom communication and submitting assignments
- At least 1.5 hours of LIVE instruction everyday
- Pre-recorded lessons throughout the week
- Instructional structures will shift based on what is developmentally-appropriate for the student. You can expect your student to move between different groups throughout the Remote Learning process. Your classroom teacher will communicate with you so you can adjust your home schedule.
- Specials - Music and PE will be provided once a week
- Informal Assessments in Reading and Math will take place three times a year (Fall/Winter/Spring) These informal assessments help drive instruction.

Our Commitment to Distance Learning & Communication

Distance Learning Plan Communication and Timing...

- Teachers will communicate on a weekly basis with parents to share what skills/concepts the children will be working on, materials to have ready for the week and topics discussed. Seesaw activities are assigned daily.
- Classroom teachers will communicate with parents via email, SeeSaw, or Zoom to engage students in rich learning tasks. All lessons and activities will be clearly outlined with video tutorials or text instructions.
- Classroom teachers will offer weekly office hours for parents to sign up, if support is needed via Zoom or questions via email. Please give our teachers a 24-hour grace period to respond, as they are also conducting conference calls, Zoom class meetings, school planning and managing their own families during the school day.
- All teachers will be touching base with families during the transition weeks via email to offer support and gauge individual needs.
- The week of November 2nd will be a transition week for students who will be switching teachers. You will receive an email from your new teacher with days and times to meet. This transition week will help your classroom teacher determine which group would be best for your child to attend.
- All classroom teachers will meet to discuss each student who is transitioning into another classroom community to help the classroom teacher learn where their new students are with their lessons and progress.
- At the end of the transition week by Friday, November 6th parents will be notified by the classroom teacher what group their child will be placed in.

Remote Learning Attendance Policy - In order to be considered "present" for that day, your child will need to attend the daily morning meeting and their scheduled morning work cycle. This morning meeting is intended to build classroom community, receive whole group lessons in a variety of curricular areas and to set the children up for success with their daily work plans.

Additional Activities and Resources for Families

Sample Home Schedule

WHEN	WHAT	HOW
Before 8:30 am	**Morning Routine** (PRACTICAL LIFE) Chore-Time	Make the bed, eat breakfast, brush teeth, get dressed, put pj's away
8:30	**Morning Circle Time on Zoom**	Whole class attend Zoom Morning circle Calendar, Group Lessons, Stories, etc.
9:00-12:25	**Morning Work Cycle**	Attend assigned Group Zoom Lessons Group 1: 9:00-10:05 Group2: 10:10-11:15 Group 3: 11:20-12:25 When not scheduled to attend Group Zoom meeting, complete daily work assignments or choice work if finished with assignments
12:30-1:00	**LUNCH**	Help with lunch tasks: setting the table, meal prep, picking up/washing their own dishes, sweeping, etc.
1:00-3:25	**Independent Afternoon Work Cycle**	Complete daily work assignments or choice work if finished with assignments Possible individual Zoom meetings with classroom teacher if support or enrichment is needed.
3:30-5:00	**Afternoon Fresh Air** (PE/RECESS)	Bike Rides, walk the dog, play outside, Board/Card games, choice work if it is raining
5:00-6:00	**Quiet Time** READ ALOUD/INDEPENDENT READING	Independent Reading, puzzles, writing, research
6:00-7:00	**Dinner**	Help with dinner tasks (setting the table, meal prep, picking up/washing own dishes, etc.)
7:00-7:30	**Free TV time**	Age-appropriate movie or TV show
7:30-8:00	**Bedtime Routine** (PRACTICAL LIFE)	Shower, brush teeth, read a bedtime story
8:00	**Bedtime**	

Additional Activities and Resources for Families

Sample Weekly Job Chart

MY DAILY CHORES

	Make Bed	Dirty clothes in Laundry Basket	Sort Laundry to be washed by color	Put Clean Clothes Away	Vacuum	Sweep floors	Put dirty dishes in dishwasher	Empty Dishwasher	Water Plants	Set Table	Tidy Room
Sunday											
Monday											
Tuesday											
Wednesday											
Thursday											
Friday											
Saturday											

Additional Activities and Resources for Families



Daily Chores

- [ ] Make bed
- [ ] Feed pets
- [ ] Clean up toys
- [ ] Clean up after eating
- [ ] Brush teeth
- [ ] Put dirty clothes in hamper
- [ ] Help with laundry
- [ ] Help cook dinner
- [ ] Clear table after a meal
- [ ] Put away clean dishes
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

Weekly Chores

- [ ] Dust
- [ ] Help with groceries
- [ ] Water plants
- [ ] Pull weeds
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

Monthly Chores

- [ ] Help wash car
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

Additional Activities and Resources for Families



Daily Chores

- [ ] Make bed
- [ ] Feed pets
- [ ] Clean up toys
- [ ] Clean up after eating
- [ ] Brush teeth
- [ ] Put dirty clothes in hamper
- [ ] Sort laundry
- [ ] Help cook dinner
- [ ] Set table before a meal
- [ ] Clear table after a meal
- [ ] Put away clean dishes
- [ ] Keep room clean
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

Weekly Chores

- [ ] Dust
- [ ] Help with groceries
- [ ] Water plants
- [ ] Pull weeds
- [ ] Clean floors with a broom or small vacuum
- [ ]
- [ ]

Monthly Chores

- [ ] Help wash car
- [ ] Rake leaves outside (in the fall)
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

Additional Activities and Resources for Families

Practical Ways to Implement Montessori in the Home

Adapted from a Blog written by Katie Wells, posted on Wellnessmama

What is Montessori?

The Montessori Method was created by Maria Montessori, Italy's first female physician. Through her direction, meticulous observations, and work with children in low-income apartment complexes in the early 1900s, she refined the use of experimental materials and created a revolutionary way to teach children that is still used worldwide in many private and public schools.

Simply put, a Montessori environment allows children to learn about the world around them through the use of their senses. The aim is not to teach facts, but to cultivate a life-long love of learning.

Montessori materials often concentrate on a single function or mechanism. These individual concepts build upon one another rather effortlessly, and so concrete objects aid the child to easily understand abstract ideas. Children work independently and focus on one task at a time.

When we give children these liberties to mold their environment, you will see how internally-motivated they get. You see the desire in their eyes to dig deeper into a topic that interests them.

Montessori in My Home?

You can benefit from even the smallest implementations of her ideas by using Montessori at home.

Adapt the Principles to Work for Your Family

When working remotely, many families have several children with ages that wouldn't normally be grouped together in a typical Montessori setting, you must adjust.

When my youngest child was one year old, I had a large gated-off section within the living room for her to safely work on age-appropriate materials. It allowed my older kids to work with small manipulatives and trays with ceramic bowls and glass cups, so I didn't have to worry about her getting into them and choking.

A year later, though, the section was opened up and reconfigured into a "toddler zone" and reading nook so that all the children could freely move around all sections of the living room, observing their sibling's work and helping one another.

Worksheets aren't inherently evil, but they do have a limited place in our classroom. The kids see them as novelties and not as a boring daily torture, so I think we found our sweet spot with them.

Our time working remotely was always evolving. There are a few Montessori fundamentals I would suggest you try.

Additional Activities and Resources for Families

Practical Ways to Implement Montessori in the Home (cont.)

The Use of Scaled Furniture and Materials

Montessori is child-led learning. Maria Montessori stressed the need for freedom and independence, that children have "absorbent minds" and with the careful preparation of the environment, the child is able, through "free, natural manifestations", to have these "spontaneous discoveries" creating a deep love of learning.

Creating spaces and using objects that are easily accessible to your child is key. Some pieces to think about acquiring are:

- **Low shelves** – Openly displaying the work materials, instead of in big bins or out of reach, show your child that these materials are special and are to be carefully handled and cared for. What you choose to put on these shelves will vary depending on the developmental level of your child and how much space you have.
- **Small tables and chairs** – Chairs and tables shouldn't be a hindrance to learning. If the chairs and tables are lightweight, your child can freely move them into different rooms fostering independence. It's amazing to see this in action. Children use them to prepare, serve and eat their snacks, help do the dishes and fold laundry, get art materials to make artwork early in the morning and get really creative with playing pretend. Don't have the budget? Repurpose an old side table or coffee table.
- **Various-sized trays or baskets** – One work or activity goes on its own individual tray. Once a work is introduced by the parent, then the child has permission to take the tray to his/her work table, and carefully with much concentration, does the work until he or she decides they are finished. Then the child returns the tray to its allotted spot on the shelf. The key is that your child has to be able carry the tray or basket from the shelf to his/her work space and back with ease, so be mindful not to buy them too large. The natural wood ones look lovely but I'd personally spend my money on more things to go on the trays than the trays themselves. Dollar stores, thrift stores, and online stores carry a ton of inexpensive options to suit your needs.
- **Small pitchers, bowls, scoops, small measuring spoons, small tongs** – These tools are all used on a daily basis in the practical life skills area of Montessori as well as the pre-writing area. For example, transferring dried lentils with a small measuring spoon from one small bowl into another, starts the process of developing a proper writing grasp. You want these tools to aid your child in their work, not frustrate them, so try them first before putting them on the shelves.

You can save a ton of money and make many of your materials at home and then make them durable by laminating them. (An amazing resource online with Montessori printables that are free or very budget-friendly is Montessori Print Shop).

Additional Activities and Resources for Families

Practical Ways to Implement Montessori in the Home (cont.)

Inspire a Love of Nature

Maria Montessori put a huge emphasis on fostering the connection between child and nature through the care of plants and animals, as well as placing a great value on creating aesthetically-pleasing surroundings.

Create a Nature Table

Fill different-sized baskets and bins with a variety of natural materials that your child can freely touch and arrange. You can change it monthly or seasonally, and while the majority can be actual organic matter, throw in some meaningful miniature objects or artificial plants as well.Some of the best group discussions and peaceful interactions happen around the Nature table.

Some Seasonal items that can be used are:

- **Fall:** Gourds, pumpkins, apples (real or fake), leaves, sunflowers (artificial or real) for flower arranging, mums, acorns, sticks, leaves, art cards of fall landscapes, cards on the life cycle of a pumpkin, dried corn, lentils, Raffia, books on fall, fall leave rubbings, etc.
- **Winter:** Evergreen, Images of winter landscapes and hibernating animals, bare branches, white table cloth to look like snow, snow globes, plastic icicles, paper snowflakes, wool snowman, animal figurines who do not hibernate, piece or pictures of winter fur on animals.
- **Spring:** Seeds, small indoor plants, small water pitcher, Assorted flowers (real and artificial), miniature birds, nest, eggs (fake), twigs, spring landscape art cards, frogs, life cycle of frogs or butterfly cards, bugs, magnifying glass, books on spring, rocks, petals, moss, green leaves, leaf rubbings, miniature dinosaurs, etc.
- **Summer:** Shells, starfish, ocean animal figurines, small figurines of boats or lighthouses, cards on whale species, plants, images of summer landscapes, flowers, bowls of fruit, herb garden, painted wooden fish, cards on the lunar phases, pictures of constellations, planets, etc.

If you don't have space for a Nature table, make a Nature tray. And if you are really pressed for space, use the nature tray as your dining room table centerpiece, or put small plants throughout your house with small pitchers beside them for the children to use.

Additional Activities and Resources for Families

Practical Ways to Implement Montessori in the Home (cont.)

Let the Child Self-Correct

So your kid didn't grasp the concept right after you gave a lesson? They might not be ready. Relax, and let it go for the day. You may have to introduce lessons 3-4 times before your child positively responds.

Most Montessori materials are either self-correcting or include a control of error. So when the child is doing the activity, they can always test themselves to see if they did the work correctly. The motivation to get things correct then comes from an internal drive to learn, not from external consequences like getting a treat if you got the problem right or being punished if you made a mistake.

It can be so easy to try to correct something before the child has had the time allowed for them to recognize the mistake. Be more of an unnoticed observer. Be encouraging and allow the progress to naturally unfold.

Stress Courtesy

So you now have at least a vague idea of how to start setting the stage for a unique learning environment, but what good are beautiful shelves filled with utterly-inspiring work material if your child has not been taught how to respect his/her work, or how to use the materials appropriately and show courtesy to others while doing so?

Before the school year begins, your focus should be on creating a very unique classroom culture by teaching your children how to conduct themselves through lessons in politeness and proper behavior.

It is a privilege to be at liberty to independently work as you wish, but with the freedom of this type of environment also comes responsibilities.

We have a duty to society to instill good citizenship and courtesy in our children.

With the use of role-playing scenarios and simple concentration activities (such as practicing pushing in a chair as quietly as possible), the child learns how to respond with good manners and reinforces polite behavior in various situations.

The six rules to use in your home can be put in small phrases so the kids can memorize them. In our classroom we are constantly practicing these rules through role-playing. The older kids get a refresher and the younger kids get to practice.

- **"One work at a time"** – You can choose from the variety of materials, but you can only choose ONE at a time. You can carefully take the tray with its materials anywhere in the room or house to work (except on the shelves themselves, which would deny other children easy access to the other materials). Once the child is finished, he/she carefully brings it back to its original spot.

Additional Activities and Resources for Families

Practical Ways to Implement Montessori in the Home (cont.)

- **"Go slowly"** – while walking into the room, while taking a tray to your spot, and doing the work without rushing – all help maintain a mode of concentration and purpose in our actions.
- **"Keep the room tidy"** – Each child has an apron and wash rag, and at the beginning and end of each school day, they do things like dust the shelves, push in their chairs, throw away scrap papers, empty out the wash basin used for washing hands, bring the snack dishes into the kitchen, and water the plants.
- **"Quiet Voices"–** This rule is a constant struggle but a necessity to creating a courteous and productive work environment. It is a good idea to come up with new games or activities to help children become sensitive to volume.
- **"Be Gentle"** – with how they handle the materials, with how they speak to their siblings and with how they care for the plants and animals they interact with.
- **"Use your words"** – Tantrums and issues with personal space is a real challenge with younger children, but growing in grace and courtesy will make a difference. Insist that your children use their words to express their feelings in a clear and calm manner, and this is where the role-playing activities have come in handy.

Examples of Scenarios to go over with Your Kids

- What do you say when you first meet someone?
- What do you do when a guest leaves your house?
- How do you ask someone to play?
- How do you tell someone no?

If children do not follow the classroom rules, they get a reminder of which rule they are breaking, and if the behavior doesn't stop, they can sit in a chair until they are ready to resume their work with courtesy. If the bad behavior still persists and becomes a distraction to their siblings working, they must leave the learning area altogether.

It is important for children to learn that they are a member of a learning community and as a member of the learning community they have a responsibility to themselves and to others to follow the grace and courtesy expectations.

Grace and courtesy, is why Montessori classrooms have that "magical air" about them.

I hope these simple ideas will be an inspiration to get you to implement Montessori in your home!

Additional Activities and Resources for Families

Practical Ways to Implement Montessori in the Home (cont.)

Resources that Gave me the Confidence to Move Forward

(If you really want to get into the real nitty gritty of what to teach, when, how to give a lesson or display the materials on the trays, and what to buy vs. what to make, here are a few of my favorite resources to help you dig deeper!)

- The Montessori Method by Maria Montessori-need I say more?
- Teaching Montessori in the home: The preschool years by Elizabeth G. Hainstock- excellent, easy hands-on activities including early practical skills, math and literacy.
- Teach me to do it myself: Montessori activities for you and your child by Maja Pitamic – great pictures with easy instructions
- Teach your Preschooler to Read and Write and Teach Your 3-7 Year Old Math by John Bowman – Does a fantastic job of outlining the sequence of work in these areas of literacy. John Bowman is to the point and gives great ideas for using things around your home as substitutes for the commercial Montessori materials...oh yeah, and free online printables with the book is a welcome addition!

My Favorite Blogs/Websites on Montessori

- Livingmontessorinow.com – the writer is a Montessori educator who homeschooled her children through high school. This is an excellent place to browse for links to printables, or to go to when you want to make a unit study and need ideas.
- Montessoriprintshop.com – a go-to in my classroom for making materials at little to no cost, as well a deeper look at Montessori theory.
- Justmontessori.com – offers a no-cost Montessori curriculum with links to downloads and pictures. It's awesome!

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