

## MONTESSORI IN THE HOME

A common question for TMS families is, “How can I bring Montessori into our home to support my child?” While home and school are distinctly different environments for our children, there are many easy ways to support their growth at home that are consistent with their Montessori experience here at school.

### ***Toddlers “Help me do it myself” & Children’s House “Hey Mom & Dad, look what I can do now”***

The work of your toddler and/or children’s house aged child is that of individual development. During these first six years she is transitioning from the total dependence of infancy to ever-greater independence in their coordination, communication and self-care. This is also a heightened time for order and a critical time for developing sustained concentration, which will prepare your child for the intellectual work of the elementary years.

Here are some tangible ways you can support.

- Coordination and Independence:
  - Have child-sized furniture (e.g., chairs) that they can move easily themselves.
  - Use child-sized utensils and kitchen items to increase your child’s fine motor skills as well as independence.
  - Place items at your child’s level. For example, put snacks on a low shelf in the pantry and refrigerator.
  - Use a child-sized bed, low to the floor if possible, so your child can move around the room safely. The entire room becomes the child’s space. To ensure your child’s safety throughout the night, a gate could be placed in the doorway.
  - Place toys on shelving if possible rather than in a toy box or container. That keeps the toys readily accessible to the children, similar to how they are organized at school.
- Contribution to the family:
  - Identify ways your child can contribute to your family. Simple things such as hanging up one’s coat, putting out napkins/setting table, filling the dog’s food bowl, dressing themselves, helping to clean up messes (have child-sized dust pan/brush, carpet sweeper).
- Sense of order:
  - Keep things simple and keep clutter to a minimum.
  - Ensure items that your child uses have a particular place in your home so your child knows where to find and put away items.
  - Limit the number of toys out at one time for your child. It can be quite overwhelming for a child to have too much to choose from. Rotate toys, keeping a small number of toys available at any one time that the child can easily use and put away.
  - Order in your child’s routines is just as important as order in their physical environment. Create consistent routines, particularly around bedtime, meals and toileting.
- Concentration:
  - Protect your child’s concentration by not interrupting unnecessarily.
  - Go to your child when needed, step back when not needed.



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- When safety is not a concern, ask, “What will happen if I do nothing,” and then watch what your child is capable of.
- Creating a peaceful environment:
  - Reserve the bedroom for sleeping and dressing so your child associates the bedroom with calm, rest and getting dressed.
  - Create a safe and inviting space in each room of your home for your child wants to be near you and involved in family life.
- Nature:
  - Introduce your child to nature by spending unstructured time outside.
  - Provide opportunities for explore natural areas in your own yard, neighborhood and parks.

### ***Elementary: “Help me be responsible and contribute to our family”***

Your elementary child is in a period of great intellectual and social development. This is a time of immense curiosity and focused attention on social relationships and fairness. Your child’s earlier keen sense of order for the physical environment may seem to disappear as they shift their focus to understanding the order of ideas, thoughts and social dynamics. They’ll need some extra support for staying organized in their belongings and personal habits.

Below are some examples of ways to support your child increasing capabilities:

- Supporting your child’s intellectual growth:
  - Have a place/desk where your child can explore his interest and work on school work and projects.
  - Encourage hobbies, i.e. models, puzzles, music & art expression and board games that will challenge your child’s intellect.
  - Create a family technology use plan that will help keep a healthy balance between “screen time” and other valuable pursuits. A few notes on technology plans.
    - The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 2 hrs. /day for total screen time, including TV, computer use, video games, etc. We would suggest less.
    - Keeping TV and computer technology in common spaces, i.e. out of children’s rooms supports healthy use and balance.
- Supporting your child’s social growth:
  - Proactively build in family times, i.e. game nights, meals, outings, etc. This will provide you opportunities to model appropriate social behaviors and contribute to their sense of belonging.
  - Regularly spend some individual undivided time with your child (each child if you have more than one) doing what they want. Some families call this *Special Time* and do it most days for 10-20 min.
  - Prepare children to spend time away from you while on play dates, sleepovers, overnight school trips etc.
    - Share with them your expectations or agreements for behavior.

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- Please talk with your child about what is and isn't appropriate touch. Though this is often a difficult topic for parents it is important that we empower our children with knowledge about what is and isn't appropriate and with the confidence to talk to us about any issues.
- Understand that your child will need additional personal space as he grows.
- Implement family meetings as a way for your child to have a voice and share in responsibility of family life.
- Supporting your child's needs for order:
  - Limit clothes and toys that are accessible at any one time. Rotate clothes seasonally and have a storage area for your child to change out toys.
  - Establish, with your child's input, clear routines, i.e. bedtime, bathing, morning, schedules, etc.
- Supporting your child's growing responsible independence:
  - Have expectations/opportunities for your child to contribute to family life.
    - Setting & clearing the table
    - Making lunch for school
    - Putting clothes in laundry
    - Keep room organized and clean
    - Take initiative in school work, both in class and at home
    - Cleaning up after oneself
    - Caring for the pet(s)
    - Food preparation (making the salad, cutting up vegetables)
    - House cleaning (dusting, sweeping, vacuuming)
    - Actively participating in family meetings
    - Involvement with home maintenance (raking leaves, cleaning out garage)
    - Helping with grocery list & grocery shopping

### ***Resources & Links***

#### **Toddlers:**

- <http://livingmontessorinow.com/2011/08/30/how-to-prepare-a-montessori-toddler-environment-at-home/>
- Books:
  - ***At Home with Montessori*** by Patricia Oriti\*
  - ***Montessori from the Start/The Child at Home, from Birth to Age Three*** by Paula Polk Lillard & Lynn Lillard Jessen\*
  - ***Understanding the Human Being – The importance of the first three years of life*** by Sylvana Quattrocchi Montanaoro, MD\*
  - ***The Child in the Family*** by Dr. Maria Montessori

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## Children's House:

- <http://www.livingmontessori.com/PreparingTheEnvironmentAtHome.htm>
- Books:
  - *At Home with Montessori* by Patricia Oriti\*

## Elementary:

- [http://www.sunrisemontessori.com/pdf-files/Montessori in the Home Environment Elementary.pdf](http://www.sunrisemontessori.com/pdf-files/Montessori%20in%20the%20Home%20Environment%20Elementary.pdf)
- Book:
  - *To educate the human potential* by Maria Montessori

## All Ages:

- <https://amshq.org/Family-Resources/Montessori-at-Home>

\*Denotes books that are available in our Parent Lending Library in our Conference Room. Please see Dee to check out any of these books.