

Interacting with Your Child the Montessori Way

When children perform activities to help themselves or the home environment, express appreciation for their work regardless of the results. Do not redo any part of their project in front of them, and if possible, do not correct any part of it at all. As children get more practice and become able to perform the physical parts of the activity with ease, they will begin longer cycles of repetition. These cycles of repetition are often annoying to adults. However, they enable the child to work with interest and, eventually, concentration.

In the beginning, it will be difficult for children to perform water activities without making a big mess. Have several beach towels on hand to help clean up the water several times. Later there will be very little spilling and the children will be able to do most of the clean-up by themselves. DURING THIS TIME IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE ADULT TO MAINTAIN A FRIENDLY ATTITUDE AND A SENSE OF HUMOR!!! Remember, praise children for what they do and try to do.

The most important aspects of a child's personality and intellect develop through participation in the everyday life of the family. They are: order, sequence, independence, self-control, self-respect, and the joy of learning and accomplishing something purposeful. A young child lives to work, and for those long accustomed to it, work becomes a lifelong habit. From this vital work of building a person, the child derives the joyfulness that learning through discovery can bring. All of this will result in a person who will enjoy the lifelong feeling of self-respect, independence and concern for others.

Specific Suggestions for each Academic Discipline

- Allow the child to do some of the following Practical Life activities:
 - Place own order at a restaurant or decide own meals
 - Pour beverages at mealtime
 - Set or clear the table
 - Wash or rinse mealtime dishes
 - Wash the table after meals
 - Wash fruits and vegetables
 - Water plants and flowers
 - Fold and sort laundry
 - Clean mirrors or windows
 - Dust furniture or floors
 - Polish brass, silver, furniture or shoes
 - Weed the garden
 - Sweep
 - Rake leaves
 - Take care of a pet
 - Brush/comb hair
 - Put away own clothing
 - Dress and undress with little assistance
 - Choose own clothing for the day
 - Brush teeth

- Wash hands
- Shake hands for greeting
- Offer something to a guest
- Use the telephone courteously
- Make own bed
- Tidy own room
- Prepare simple foods (for example, hot dogs)
- Help unload groceries and sort them
- Allow child to clean up own spills

● Allow the child to do some of the following Sensorial activities:

- Invite your child to taste or smell condiments once and then do the same ones blindfolded
- Let your child organize shirts or socks by color.
- In a park ask your child which tree is tallest/shortest (or downtown in a big city you can do this with buildings).
- Cut an apple, pear, banana, peach, orange, and strawberry (or other fruits). Show them to her, mix them up and let her taste them blind-folded and guess which is which.
- Sit on a bench near a busy street with your child facing you and ask your child to guess which sound is which (person walking with heels or sneakers, motorbike, car, bus, or truck, etc.)

● Allow the child to do some of the following Mathematics activities:

- Put numbers on a wall.
- Ask your child to count the steps as you go up or down stairs.
- When your child helps set the table, ask him to count the flatware.
- During a visit to a park, count flowers, bugs or whatever else appears often enough to count in small numbers (leaves in the Fall, obviously, are too numerous).
- If you count something you can gather (like white stones) you can drop one and say, "Oh dear, I have dropped a stone! How many do we have left?"
- At the grocery store ask your child to get some number of an item you need to buy.

● Allow the child to do some of the following Language activities:

- Give your child enough time to learn the names of objects.
- Put the names of objects on cards and tape them to the wall or shelf where he can see them.
- Encourage your child to talk to you about their interests. Show interest and ask questions that show you were paying attention.
- Read to your child every day.
Every age group! Reading the

same book every day for weeks on end, at your child's request, is fine. Encourage your child to ask questions about what you have read, or ask, "What do you think may happen next?"

- Read books with rhymes and traditional stories.
 - As your child learns rhymes, say them with her and leave the last word for her to fill in. As a variation you can be silly by replacing the word your child knows with a word that rhymes with it.
- Ask your child to read to you (depending on age)
- Allow the child to do some of the following Cultural Studies and Science activities:
 - When your child finds a frog, bug, moth or ant, offer a magnifying glass to look at it closely.
 - If your child sees a birds nest, give her binoculars to see better, and ask her to guess what might happen to the baby birds
 - Offer measuring tapes, rulers, thermometers, balance scales, clocks, measuring cups, etc. to measure everything in their world.
 - When a child asks "How does this work?" help them find out by disassembling non-functioning clocks, toasters, CD players, etc. Make sure they have safe screwdrivers, pliers, etc. and show them how to use these tools safely.
 - Watch the wind by observing flags, leaves, clouds. Ask your child what he thinks causes the movement. Ask, "What is wind?"
 - Connect pieces of plastic pipe and roll marbles or pour water through them; change the angle to see what happens.
 - Plant a garden and watch plants grow - flowers and vegetables. Measure growth each day or week. See "How does Your Garden Grow?"
 - Keep an atlas in the house, and when a show on television takes place far away, or when a visitor from out of town comes to the house, look up in the atlas where that place is. Discuss with your child what language is spoken there, and how long it would take to go there by different means of transportation.

