



Montessori House
Curriculum for Toddlers
18 Months to 2 1/2 Years of Age

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By the Time Your Child is Three

This album provides Montessori material for working with toddlers up to the age of three. The work will prepare your child for the first year of Montessori Primary class, which begins at two and a half to three years of age. There is a slight overlap in focus that will assure that your child receives all of the necessary skills to continue successfully.

By the time you finish working with this album, your child will be quite accomplished in a range of fine and gross motor skills, hand-eye coordination, language, social development, and self-control.

A three-year old can do the following:

- Prepare a simple snack
- Eat independently
- Serve a simple snack or beverage
- Go to the toilet and wash hands appropriately
- Choose from a limited selection of work
- Ready for group interaction in a social setting
- Adjust to a simple change in plans such taking an umbrella for a sudden rainstorm or waiting until tomorrow to go to the playground

Self-control is also evident as he or she:

- Balance well enough to walk securely both indoors and outdoors
- Carry a simple object and walk without bumping into things
- Carry a small tray, walk to a table, put the tray on the table, and sit in a chair
- Stand without leaning
- Control large muscles for complex tasks such as scrubbing, sweeping, hanging clothes
- Controls body movements while walking or doing other motions
- Naturally maintains a healthy head, neck, and back posture when moving, carrying, and sitting
- Exhibits an awareness of body position in its surroundings

Crucial hand-eye coordination has developed so that he or she can:

- Use the pincer grasp
- Make a swiping motion
- Close all fingers
- Use the finger and thumb grip
- Use the three-fingered grasp
- Squeeze hands strongly together

Language use as developed so that it is possible to:

- Express him or herself in the adult form of the language so that a non-family member can understand

- Carry and handle books appropriately
- Show familiarity with songs and music such as being able to sing a favorite tune
- Associate language with real objects and use this command of the language to interact with the world around him or her, for example, requesting a particular food for dinner
- Participate in conversations that include adults
- Initiate conversations with language exchange in full sentences
- Take turns speaking in a conversation
- Builds conversation

Psychological Development:

- Developing trust in relationship with his or her external environment and self.
Navigates his or her environment with confidence during daily life.
- Understanding of self as a separate being.
- Basic comprehension of object permanence
- Uses the pronoun "I"
- Positive self-image

Toddler Infilare Exercises (Series V): Discs on Horizontal Dowel



Similar to the cubes on a vertical dowel article we published earlier, this exercise with discs on a horizontal dowel helps your child refine his or her hand-eye coordination, experiment and develop different finger grasps, and observe and test "crossing the midline"

Look for the midpoint in the dowel and see how the relationship between the objects on the dowel and the arrangement interact. Your child will experiment with this relationship as he or she arranges all of the discs on this particular dowel.

Material needed:

- Discs on a horizontal dowel
- Mat for floor work

After you present the equipment, store it on the low shelf to make it accessible to your child whenever he or she wants to use it.

Presentation:

1. Invite your child to join you for this exercise.
2. Your child can unroll the mat.
3. Sit next to your child
4. Put the equipment down on the mat in front of you.
5. Take the discs off one by one and place them on the mat in front of the equipment.
6. Pick up a disc using the three-fingered grasp.
7. Carefully fit it onto the dowel. Push it all the way on.
8. Replace the remaining discs one by one. Put each disc next to the other soundlessly.
9. Ask your child if he or she would like to try.
10. Let your child experiment with the exercise independently. If he or she is happy working alone, you can step away and let your child experience the feeling of being immersed in his or her own work. Avoid the temptation to reach out and touch the discs to move them or to adjust something in the exercise. The project focus is on handling and trial and error, not "getting it right."

Note that we use the same presentation for all the dowel equipment.

Your notes

Date of initial presentation ____ Your child's age ____

Observations:

Refined Hand Movements & Rubber Bands

This is one of the cheapest and easiest projects that we have made. Rubber band exercise has been a huge hit in the classroom and you can make a number of engaging projects with them.

Toddlers are captivated by the rubber bands as they stretch and move, and the refined hand movements plus hand-eye coordination practice are fantastic.

Material needed:

- Six elastic or rubber bands.
- Small box

Rubber or silicon bands work well.

Presentation:

- Invite your child to join you for this exercise.
- Your child can unroll the mat.
- Bring the box to the mat.
- Show your child how to use one hand to hold the rubber band as the other hand draws it back.
- Release the second hand and watch the rubber band fly!

Presentation #2

Show your child how to stretch the rubber bands between stationary pegs. You can use the knobs of the Knobbed Cylinders for this, if you have them, or use the clothespins and bucket. You can also use the pegs on a stand from the ellipsoid on small pegs exercise presented in the introductory album.

Presentation #3 (DIY)

You will need more bands for this one. Create a grid of 16 pegs in a square on a piece of wood. Get bands of different sizes. Let your child create patterns and shapes using the bands.

Your notes

Date of initial presentation _____ Your child's age _____

Observations:

Small Muscle Development - Transferring Objects to a Bowl

Grasping and hand-eye coordination are key to this exercise.

Materials needed:

- Two deep bowls
- Ping pong balls
- Tray
- Child-sized table

The ping pong balls should be in the bowl on the left, so you can transfer them into the bowl on the right.

Presentation:

1. Invite your child to join you.
2. Walk to the shelf and bring the tray with the material.
3. Sit next to your child.
4. Grasp a ping pong ball.
5. Lift your hand just a bit above the bowl.
6. Put the ball down quietly in the bowl on the right.
7. Repeat until all the balls are transferred.
8. Turn the tray around so the balls are on the left again.
9. Invite your child to try.
10. Put the tray back on the shelf. If your child wants to stay and work with the ping pong balls, he or she can put the tray back on the shelf.

If your child is very young, use soft cloth balls or cubes, so that they can be squeezed and grasped to facilitate easy transfer.

Expand this exercise by using different types of materials and open containers.

Presentation #2:

Use a small pair of tongs to grasp cloth balls and transfer them from one bowl to another. Children's chopsticks (with an attached bridge) work well for this project, too.

Your notes

Date of initial presentation ____ Your child's age ____

Observations:

Sensorial: Brain Development

For young toddlers, the world is a place of sensory exploration and experiences that help them understand their environment.

Tactile exploration, visual feedback, auditory discovery, and other sensory inputs allow for a degree of self-learning and teaching that cannot be duplicated through a traditional teaching presentation.

Presentations here use minimal language. The objective of the presentation is to show how you handle the material, and then leave your child to explore independently. This process of this exploration is the goal of each exercise. The result is not important at this stage. A child may make the same mistake with the Velcro dressing frame over and over again. And then, one day, he or she finds the right fit, so that the frame looks the same as it did on the shelf. This experience of trial and error is an invaluable part of the process.

When you prepare your home classroom in the evening or early morning before your child enters it, make sure that the material is clean and that all the arrangements are tidy, so that he or she will see how everything is supposed to look.

Helicopter teaching is forbidden in Montessori, so if you have the desire to hover, put together a small project for yourself at the other end of the room or in the next room, so that you are busy until your child requests help or until it is time for a new presentation.

Presentations of materials are done on the basis of a child's development, so there is no set schedule. Once your child is working well with one piece of equipment, introduce another one. For a typical two-year-old, this may mean introducing hand washing on Monday morning after snack, presenting a puzzle on Tuesday afternoon, leaving Wednesday for him or her to work with the puzzle and/or hand washing, and then presenting the Velcro dressing frame on Thursday after lunch. After you have put out material and presented it, your child is free to work with it at any time.

Montessori equipment is designed to be self-correcting. Children can easily see errors in the matching of colors, shapes, sizes, or quantities. This allows children to learn how to use multiple senses in analyzing the world around them. The names of the colors, the construction of the Red Rods, or the correct quantities in the math Spindle Boxes are not the objective of the exercises, but the means by which children learn these concepts.

In one of her books designed for parents, *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*, Maria Montessori wrote extensively about the importance of letting children work with material independently, so that the trial-and-error discovery process allowed them to learn on their own. She describes eloquently the joy that her students expressed as they finally learned how to put Red Rods in the proper order that they had seen on the shelf. Had a teacher or parent corrected them as they went along, this important learning process would have been ruined.

Sorting

You can set up sorting exercises using any objects of like color or type.

Material needed:

- Large empty oatmeal container cylinder
- Five each of two different objects such as blocks and balls
- Two bowls
- Tray
- Mat for floor work

You can use any two types of objects for sorting. Objects within a set should be identical.

Presentation:

1. Invite your child to join you for this exercise.
2. He or she can unroll the mat.
3. Bring the tray to the mat and sit with your child on the floor mat.
4. Take the lid off the container and put it to the side.
5. Put the two bowls on the mat.
6. Take out a block. Say, "This is a block." Place it in the bowl on the left.
7. Take out a ball. Say, "This is a ball." Place it in the bowl on the right.
8. Note that you work from left to right, but if your child works in a different order (for non-language material), it is fine.
9. Sort all the objects.
10. Mix them up again by putting them back into the container.
11. Let your child sort them.
12. You and your child can share cleanup or, if your child is working happily, let him or her continue and put everything away at the end.

Expansion exercise:

Take a large empty oatmeal container cylinder and wrap it in construction paper. Fill it with five each of three different objects such as balls, small empty containers, blocks, or movable alphabet letters. Sit with your child on the floor mat. Follow the same procedure that we always use for this type of presentation (Take the lid off the container, put it to the side, take the objects out of the container, sort them, put them back, and let your child repeat the process). If your child wants to skip your presentation, go ahead and let him or her take over.

Your notes

Date of initial presentation ____ Your child's age ____

Observations: