



M3 by Multisori

MONTESSORI PRACTICAL LIFE
CURRICULUM FOR AGES
18-36 MONTHS



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Transitioning to Primary



Supply List

This list looks long, but you have most of these items at home already.

What You'll Need to Use This Resource:

Items Needed for Every M3

Subject Area:

1. Laminator
2. Lamination sheets
3. Scissors
4. Straight edge cutting tool
5. Color printer
6. Color printer ink
7. Printer paper
8. Crayons
9. Markers
10. Pencils
11. Scotch tape
12. Stapler & staples

[Click Here to Review
Optional Educational
Manipulatives & Tools
Available on Amazon](#)

Items Needed for this Subject Area:

1. Small, square clothes / washcloths
2. Mild soap
3. Liquid dish soap
4. Hamper
5. Whisk, preferably child-sized
6. Empty container with lid, such as a coffee can or shoe box
7. Colorful child-safe paint
8. Shoelace or string with plastic end
9. Comfortable toddler clothing
10. Pillows and cushions
11. Blocks, boxes or nesting cups
12. Ball to kick

Items Needed for this Subject Area:

1. Work mat or chowki table
2. Small table
3. Accessible shelving
4. Trays for works
5. Child-sized utensils
6. Small pitcher
7. Small, soft, round sponge
8. Two identical bowls
9. Two large identical containers
10. Small basket or bucket
11. Large wooden beads & thick string
12. Large clothespins
13. Wooden hammer & peg set
14. Nuts and bolts driver board
15. Small bowls
16. Colorful tape
17. Clean laundry basket
18. Dry goods for pouring (not beans!)
19. Book: "Germs are Not for Sharing"
20. Booster seat
21. Shoes with velcro straps
22. Jacket with snaps
23. Large teddy bear & sweater with large buttons that fits the bear
24. Adult and thin toddler socks
25. Adult and toddler coats with zippers
26. Scarf
27. Mirror
28. Small stool or chair
29. Large cheap paper
30. At least three bean bags
31. Velcro dots
32. Brad fasteners
33. Children's gardening tools, small pots, seeds & potting soil
34. Toy animal (cat or dog)
35. Hook that is accessible for the child
36. Lunchbox
37. Soft, child-safe belt
38. Child-height cubby, drawer or shelf
39. Small, lightweight bag
40. Tissues
41. Diapers and wipes

Optional Items:

1. Pikler triangle or other climber
2. Indoor trampoline
3. Wobble cushion
4. Colorful silk scarves
5. Large velcro dressing frame
6. Large buttons dressing frame
7. Large buckles dressing frame
8. Large snaps dressing frame
9. Empty coffee canister
10. Large plastic buttons
11. Food coloring
12. Muffin tin
13. Colorful pom-poms
14. Pipe cleaners
15. Plastic strainer
16. Rubber, woven or thick cloth mat
17. Colorful flowers
18. Small jars with lids that screw on
19. Large pom-poms
20. Dry rice
21. Toddler stepstool
22. Fabric napkins
23. Regular napkins
24. Napkin rings
25. Feather duster
26. Small spray bottle
27. Child sized broom & dustpan
28. Child-sized potty or toilet seat insert
29. Water dispenser with spigot
30. Upbeat children's music
31. Powdered milk or juice
32. Small snack foods such as Cheerios, goldfish or berries
33. Rain boots, jacket & pants



Preparing the Environment

Print

Print only the materials that are developmentally appropriate for your student. Print multiple copies for subject areas in which your student is in a sensitive period. Retain the electronic files for future use.

Organize

Gather printed materials, laminated materials, books, and educational products you purchased for the study. Separate these items into groups based on the subject area.

Laminate

Laminate only the materials that:

- will be repeatedly used,
- will only be functional if laminated (like puzzles), or
- you want to store for future use.

Shelf

Set up shelves based on the subject area. Use trays arranged on secure shelving that is accessible by your student independently. Ensure that each tray contains all materials required to complete the activity on the tray (think about pencils, erasers, markers, glue, daubers, pom poms, dice, etc...). Prepare and shelf the trays in an orderly and tidy fashion. NOTE: For the toddler age group, do not leave manipulatives on shelves while your learner is unsupervised.



The Fine Print

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Please Do Not:

- Share this or any other Multisori documentation or information.
- Alter, edit or change the documentation or information in any way.
- Sell or loan the documentation or information in any way.
- Copy the documentation or information in any way.

Please Do:

- Join the Multisori [Facebook group](#) - it's free & provides ongoing support, along with a worldwide, supportive tribe of like-minded Montessori homeschoolers.
- Tag your social media posts using our curriculum with [#Multisori](#).

Feedback:

- If you are happy with your curriculum, please leave us a review on [Google here](#).
- If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to reach out to info@multisori.com.



Practical Life

Simplified Scope & Sequence

1 *Basic Classroom Skills*

Using the Sink, Participating in Daily Routines: Arrival/Dismissal, Circle Time, Transitions & Nap Time, Using a Work Mat, Walking Carefully, Opening & Closing a Door

2 *Care of Environment*

Folding, Dusting, Sponging, Washing: Table & Dish, Sorting, Tidiness, Gardening: Digging, Planting, Watering, Weeding, & Harvesting

3 *Control of Movement: Basic Skills*

Pouring, Mixing, Whisking, Transferring: With Hands & With a Spoon

4 *Control of Movement: Fine Motor Skills*

Hand-Eye Coordination, Clamping, Stringing, Lacing, Hammering, Fastening

Multisori's toddler practical life curriculum offers over 150 pages of fun and engaging learning opportunities designed for children ages 18-36 months. It follows the traditional Montessori scope & sequence, which is simplified for you on the left. Use this simplified scope & sequence to learn about the concepts and skills taught in the practical life curriculum, and to determine an appropriate starting point. Each of the headings listed to the left are hyperlinked to the corresponding materials' starting point for easy navigation.



Practical Life

Simplified Scope & Sequence

5 *Control of Movement: Gross Motor Skills*

Balance, Walking, Climbing, Stacking, Tossing, Kicking, Jumping, Rolling, Running, Scrubbing, Caring for Animals

6 *Care of Person*

Using a Cubby, Independent Dressing, Packing & Unpacking a Lunch Box, Personal Hygiene, Eating Independently, Dressing Frames: Simple Alternatives to the Large Button, Large Velcro, Large Zipper, Large Buckling, and Large Snapping Frames

7 *Independent Toileting*

Table of Contents, Diapering, Preparing for Toilet Learning, Toilet Learning Quick Start Guide, Toileting

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M3 by Multisori Practical Life Assessment Rubric

Student Name: _____

Student DOB: _____

			Date Started	Date Completed
PART 1	Basic Classroom Skills	Using the Sink: Understanding Hot/Cold Knobs		
		Participating in Daily Routines: Arrival/Dismissal		
		Participating in Daily Routines: Circle Time		
		Participating in Daily Routines: Transitions		
		Participating in Daily Routines: Nap Time		
		Using a Work Mat		
		Walking Carefully		
		Opening and Closing a Door		
PART 2	Care of the Environment	Folding		
		Dusting		
		Sponging		
		Table Washing		
		Dish Washing		
		Cloth Washing: Sorting Clothes		
		Tidiness/Orderliness: Tidying Up		
		Gardening: Digging		
		Gardening: Planting		
		Gardening: Watering		
		Gardening: Weeding		
		Gardening: Harvesting		
PART 3	Control of Movement: Basic Skills	Pouring		
		Mixing		
		Whisking		
		Transferring by Hand		
		Transferring with a Spoon		
PART 4	Control of Movement: Fine Motor Skills	Hand-Eye Coordination		
		Clamping Clothespins		
		Stringing Beads		
		Lacing		
		Hammering Pegs		
		Fastening Bolts		



M3 by Multisori Practical Life Assessment Rubric

Student Name: _____

Student DOB: _____

			Date Started	Date Completed
PART 5	Control of Movement: Gross Motor Skills	Balance		
		Walking Up & Down Stairs		
		Climbing		
		Stacking		
		Tossing a Bean Bag		
		Kicking		
		Jumping		
		Rolling		
		Running		
		Scrubbing		
		Caring for Animals		
PART 6	Care of Person	Using a Cubby		
		Independent Dressing		
		Packing & Unpacking a Lunchbox		
		Personal Hygiene		
		Eating Independently		
		Large Button Dressing Frame		
		Large Velcro Dressing Frame		
		Large Zipper Dressing Frame		
		Large Buckling Dressing Frame		
PART 7	Independent Toileting	Large Snapping Dressing Frame		
		Diapering		
		Preparing for Toilet Learning		
		Toilet Learning		
		Day-Time Independent Toileting		



Assessing Readiness



A toddler is ready to begin this curriculum when they are able to walk, string words together, follow simple 1-2 step directions, grasp items using a whole hand, and **most importantly**, show interest in the activities.

There is a wide range of normal human development between 18-36 months, and each child is unique. **Please do not mistake readiness for intelligence.** That said, if you have any concerns about your child's development, speak to your pediatrician.

If anything in this curriculum does not seem appropriate for your learner, use your observations and intuition to pick and choose what to introduce as they mature.

Never be afraid to omit or adapt an activity to your student's needs.
This is part of following the child.





Practical Life

PART 1

Basic Classroom Skills



Practical Life

Turning a Faucet On and Off

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A sink
- A step-stool (if necessary) for your student to reach the sink

SAFETY: MONITOR YOUR CHILD WHEN USING THE HOT FAUCET TO ENSURE THEY DON'T GET BURNED.

Before you begin:

1. Take your student to the bathroom or kitchen.

What to do:

1. Introduce the activity, saying, "We are going to learn how to turn the water on and off today. This way you can wash your hands or get a drink of water when you need to."
2. Slowly and deliberately, demonstrate how to turn the water on for your learner. Say, "When I pull up on this knob (or turn this knob) the water will turn on."
3. Next, demonstrate how to turn the water off. Say, "When I push down on this knob (or turn this knob back), the water will turn off."
4. Encourage the child to try turning the water on and off.
5. Once they are comfortable turning the water on and off, explain that you can adjust the temperature of the water to be warmer or colder. Say, "When I turn the handle this way, the water gets warmer. When I turn the handle this way, the water gets colder." Encourage your student to feel the water as you adjust the temperature.
6. Invite your student to practice adjusting the water temperature, staying close by to avoid potential burns from water that is too hot.

Variation:

1. Go outside and teach your learner how to use the spigot and hose. Slowly and deliberately, model how to use the spigot to fill a bucket or spray water from the hose. Take time to explain what outside items are ok to water and what should not be watered.

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Practical Life

Participating in Daily Routines: Arrival/Dismissal

18-36 months

IMPORTANT:

Always print with the setting "Fit to Printable Area"

Supplies Needed:

- Work Mat or Chowki Table
- Arrival Routines Cards (page 14)
- Dismissal Routines Cards (page 15)
- Variation 1: Homeschool Arrival Routine Cards (page 16) and Homeschool Dismissal Routine Cards (page 17) - optional

SAFETY: STAY ALERT AND OFF YOUR PHONE WHEN DROPPING OFF OR PICKING UP YOUR CHILDREN.

Before you begin:

1. Print, laminate, and trim Arrival Routine Cards and Dismissal Routines Cards (attached).

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Introduce the activity to the child, saying, "Today, we are going to talk about what to do when we arrive at school and what we do when we get ready to go home."
3. Explaining each card as you go, show your learner each card of the arrival routine in order. For the first card, you might say, "This is arriving at school. When we arrive, we get out of the car and walk toward the teacher."
4. After each card is explained, set the arrival cards on the table or mat in order.
5. Ask your student to point to each card as they practice the action, saying, "First, we arrive. Can you show me arriving?" Encourage them to point to the correct card and to practice the action.
6. Repeat the same process with the dismissal cards.
7. If desired, hang the cards in a conspicuous place at the arrival/dismissal location - hang at the child's eye level.

Variation:

1. Homeschool variation:
Begin the day with a warm greeting and breakfast. Work with your toddler to prepare the learning space. First, tidy up. Next, review the daily plan. Then, allow your toddler to choose their first activity. At the end of learning time, sound a chime or sing a special song to signal that it's time to tidy up, have free play and eat lunch or snack. If desired, use the Homeschool Arrival/Dismissal Cards as described on the left.

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Arrive at School

1



Put Bag in Cubby

2



Hang up Jacket

3



Put on Inside Shoes

4



Wash Hands

5



Choose Activity

6



Clean up Work

1



Circle Time

2



Put on Outside Shoes

3



Put on Jacket

4



Put on Backpack

5



Wave Goodbye!

6



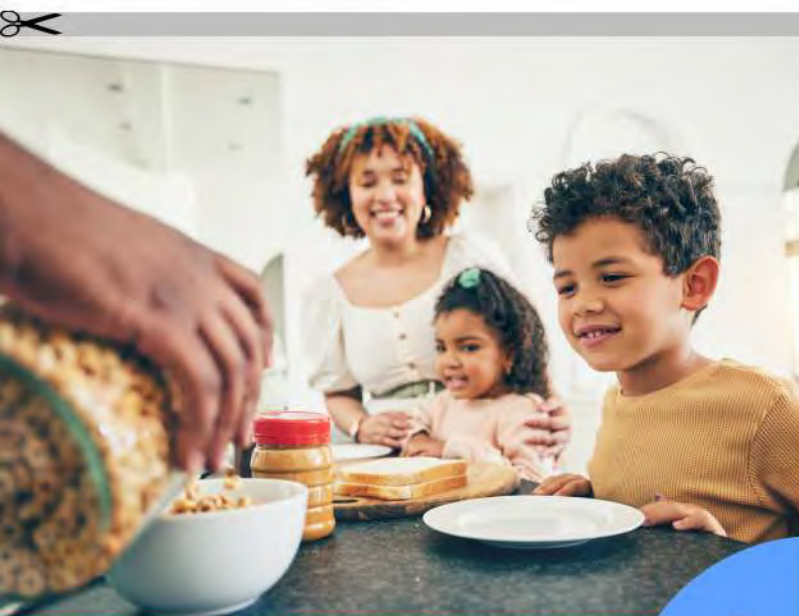
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Homeschool Arrival Routine Cards



Morning Greeting

1



Breakfast

2



Tidy Up

3



Talk About Our Day

4



Choose Activity

5



Homeschool Dismissal Routine Cards



Hear the Closing Sound

1



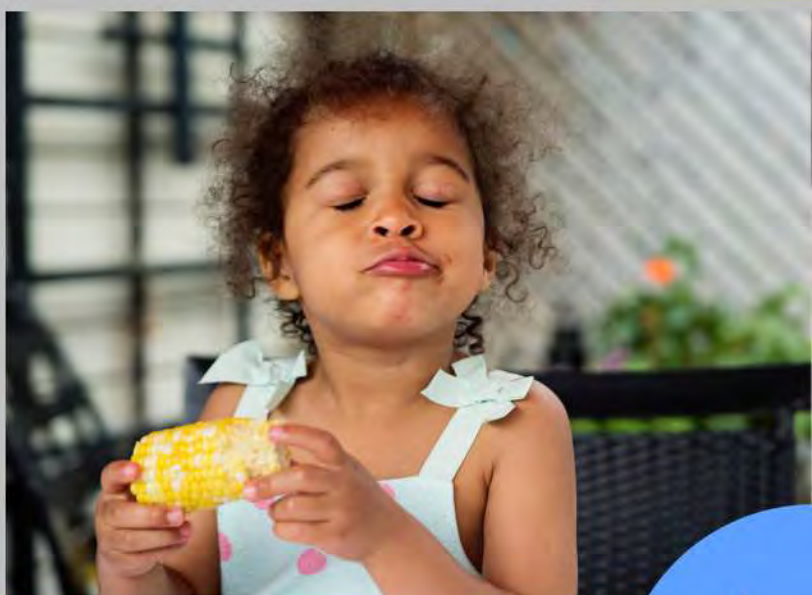
Tidy Up

2



Free Play

3



Eat

4

A Note About Circle Time



In a toddler Montessori classroom, circle time is a crucial part of the children's daily routine. Circle time builds community and provides a predictable, structured opportunity for children to gather, form social connections, and practice grace and courtesy.

During circle time, children are gently guided in listening, taking turns, and participating respectfully—skills that support future cooperative learning. It also helps introduce the rhythm of the day, giving children a sense of time and sequence through songs, stories, and simple discussions.

A Note About Circle Time



Circle time can be replicated in any environment, though easiest in learning environments with two or more children.

A Montessori circle time routine typically includes:

1. Good-Morning Song
2. Calendar
3. Finger Play
4. Weather
5. Story-Time, and
6. Movement.

The next few pages offer hyperlinked examples of activities appropriate for each of the six parts of circle time outlined above.

1. Good Morning Song



Good morning songs are a vital part of toddler circle time, setting the tone for the day and providing a predictable, joyful transition into learning. These songs do more than just say hello—they create a sense of belonging, foster social connection, and support language development. When sung regularly, they help toddlers feel seen, safe, and welcomed into the classroom community. Below are three of our favorite good morning songs:

1. The Good Morning Song
2. Good Morning to You
3. Good Morning, Dear Friend (this song can be personalized using the names of your learners)

2. Calendar



Reviewing the calendar during circle time helps toddlers build a sense of time, routine, and anticipation. Though abstract, concepts like “today,” “tomorrow,” and “yesterday” become more meaningful when tied to real-life events and consistent language. The calendar portion of circle time can include singing catchy days-of-the-week songs, discussing the weather, and marking special events like birthdays or field trips. These activities support language development, memory, and social connection—all in a fun and engaging way. Here are our favorite calendar-themed songs:

1. [The Days of the Week Song](#)
2. [The Months of the Year Song](#), and this playlist has one special song per month:
3. [Calendar Songs by Month](#)

2. Calendar



To review the date with toddlers during circle time, start by singing a simple “Days of the Week” song to help them learn the days. Then, say the current day and encourage children to repeat it, mentioning “yesterday” or “tomorrow” to build time awareness. For example, “Yesterday was Tuesday, tomorrow will be Thursday.” Next, introduce the months with a fun song to familiarize them with the names. After singing the months song, say the full date, “Today is Tuesday, June 3rd in the year 2025.”

Use the provided calendar and invite the students to help mark the day or month.

Repeating this routine daily helps reinforce understanding and creates a comforting rhythm.

3. Fingerplay Activities



Fingerplay activities build fine motor coordination, attention, and early literacy skills. Here are some ideas for this portion of your classroom's circle time:

1. The Itsy Bitsy Spider – classic hand motions
2. Five Little Monkeys – counting and bouncing fingers
3. Where is Thumbkin – finger isolation and greeting
4. This Little Piggy – toes or fingers, depending on setting
5. Pat-a-Cake – interactive clapping and pretend play
6. Here is a Beehive – hiding fingers in hand and buzzing out

4. Weather



Including the weather in Montessori toddler circle time fosters a meaningful connection to the natural world. Naming and observing the weather supports language development, curiosity, and practical thinking. Toddlers begin to understand how conditions like rain or sun affect their routines—especially what to wear—encouraging independence and decision-making. To explore the weather, look at the sky together and ask simple questions like, “What do you see?” Use familiar words like sunny, rainy, or cloudy, and invite children to turn the weather wheel to match what they observe. Over time, this daily ritual builds awareness, confidence, and a growing sense of responsibility for their environment and choices.



5. Story Time



In the Montessori approach, story time supports the natural development of language, concentration, and imagination. Toddlers absorb rich vocabulary and concepts in a calm, prepared space that honors their individual pace. Rather than passive listening, story time encourages active engagement—whether through watching, listening, or later retelling—fostering a meaningful connection to language and culture. Children are gently invited to participate without pressure, nurturing autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and a lifelong love of stories and learning. For book suggestions that align with these principles, see the recommended reading list on the next page.



Below are books we recommend for your story time:



The Snowy Day
Ezra Jack Keats



Flip, Flap, Fly
Phyllis Root



Whistle for Willie
Ezra Jack Keats



What Makes a Rainbow
Betty Ann Schwartz



Goodnight Moon
Margaret Wise Brown



In the Forest
Maurice Pledger



A Farmer's Life for me
Jan Dobbins



Going to the Zoo
Tom Paxton



Over in the Meadow
Ezra Jack Keats



The Very Hungry Caterpillar
Eric Carle



Where Do I Sleep
Jennifer Blomgren



Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
Bill Martin Jr.



Freight Train
Donald Crews



Here Are My Hands
Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault



Inch by Inch
Leo Lionni



Which ones
have you read?



6. Movement



Movement and stretching activities encourage gross motor development and help toddlers release energy in a guided way. Here are some ideas for this portion of your classroom's circle time:

1. Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes – gentle movement and naming body parts
2. Reach for the Sky, Touch the Ground – simple stretching up and bending down
3. If You're Happy and You Know It – active clapping, stomping, jumping, etc.
4. Stretch Like a Cat, Curl Like a Mouse – slow and creative animal movements
5. Shake Out Your Sillies – perfect for excited and energetic toddlers
6. Sleeping Bunnies – acting out sleeping, then hopping—good for self-regulation

Practical Life

Before You Begin: Preparing Circle Time Resources

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Circle Time Sequence Cards (page 29)
- Months of the Year Cards (page 30)
- Calendar (page 31)
- Calendar Number Tiles (page 32)
- Weather Wheel and Spinner (page 33)
- Velcro dots
- A brad (to fasten spinner to weather wheel)

IMPORTANT:
Always print with
the setting
"Fit to Printable
Area"

How to Prepare your Resources (this will take some time):

1. Print one copy of the circle time sequence cards, months of the year cards, calendar, calendar number tiles and weather spinner. Print two copies of the weather wheel (for added durability).
2. Glue the two weather wheels together so that they line up perfectly. Trim any imperfect edges. When complete, one side should show the weather wheel. The other side should be blank (white).
3. Follow the directions at the top of each printout to prepare quickly and easily.
4. Affix Velcro dots to each white square of the calendar. Using the opposite side of the Velcro dot, affix Velcro dots to the calendar number tiles. You will add a number tile on each day of school, starting over again at the start of each new month.
5. Affix Velcro dots to the months of the year cards. Using the opposite side of the Velcro dot, affix a single Velcro dot to the calendar at the top left. You will change the month on the first day of each month going forward.
6. Affix weather spinner to weather wheel at ✕ with brad.
7. Hang the calendar in your circle time area.
8. Store all of your circle time resources in an organized fashion in your circle time area, high enough that your learners cannot access them independently.

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Good Morning Song

1



Calendar

2



Finger Play

3



Weather

4



Story-Time

5



Movement

6

Months of the Year Cards

Laminate & trim. Then, affix Velcro dot to the back of each month card.

January

July

February

August

March

September

April

October

May

November

June

December

Calendar

Cut, laminate & cut again. Hang on wall in circle time area.



Affix name of month here using Velcro dot

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

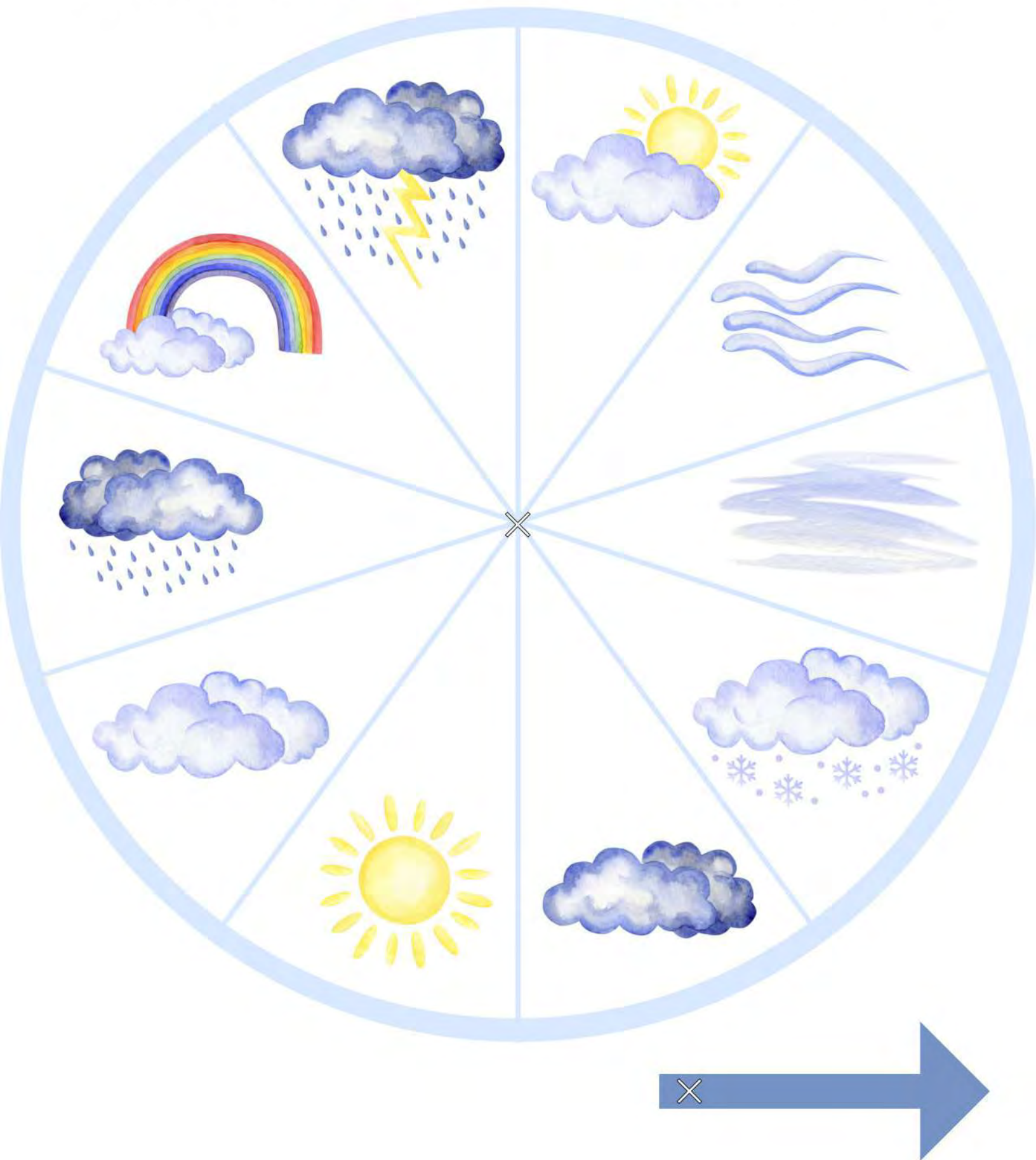
Calendar Number Tiles

Laminate & trim. Affix Velcro dot to the back of each tile.

[illegible]

Weather Wheel

Print two copies of wheel & glue together. Print one copy of spinner.
Cut, trim, laminate & trim again. Affix spinner to wheel at X with brad.



Practical Life

Participating in Daily Routines: Circle Time

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A designated circle time area such as a rug
- A basket of age-appropriate props
- Prepared Multisori Circle Time Resources (above)
- A bell, chime, harmonica, specific clapping pattern or some other auditory cue for the start of circle time

SAFETY: MAKE SURE YOUR LEARNERS DON'T SIT SO CLOSE TO ONE ANOTHER THAT ACCIDENTS HAPPEN.

Before you begin:

1. Set up your circle time space clearly and introduce it before your first gathering. Let children know what sound will signal circle time.
2. Prepare a basket with props and have materials like sequence cards, calendar pieces, and the weather wheel ready and accessible.

What to do:

1. Sound the circle time cue and help learners clean up and gather.
2. Begin by reviewing your Circle Time sequence cards. Greet the group and preview the activities (song, calendar, fingerplay, weather, story, movement).
3. Sing the good morning song warmly.
4. Use the calendar to discuss the day, month, and date.
5. Lead the fingerplay with matching movements.
6. Talk about the weather and name it using the weather wheel.
7. Read a story expressively, pointing to pictures and asking simple questions.
8. Then, lead a movement activity by modeling and describing each action. End with a closing song or ritual, dismissing children one or two at a time.

Variation:

1. Invite your students to bring "News" to share during circle. Students can have a specific day of the week to bring an item to share with others. This will help facilitate comfort with public speaking early.

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Practical Life

Participating in Daily Routines: Transitions

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Variation 1: Visual Schedule (optional)

Giving toddlers a choice during transitions empowers them and increases their sense of autonomy, making the process smoother.

Before you begin:

1. Ensure the next activity is prepared and ready for students before you begin the transition to it.

What to do:

1. Using a gentle and calm tone, give your student a verbal warning a few minutes before the transition. For example, say, "In five minutes, we will clean up and wash our hands for snack."
2. Use an auditory cue like a simple song or rhyme that signals the end of one activity and the beginning of another. For example, "Clean up, clean up, everybody, everywhere. Clean up, clean up, everybody do your share!"
3. Involve your learner in the transition by giving them a small task like putting books back on the shelf.
4. If the child is struggling with transitions, acknowledge their feelings, saying, "I know you're having fun playing, but it's time to eat snack now. We will play again later."
5. Provide positive reinforcement for successful transitions. Say something like, "Thank you for cleaning up your work and getting ready for snack."

Variations:

1. Using the attached visual schedule, create a pictorial of the day's activities (in order). Review it each morning with your student. After completing one activity, remove the picture of that activity and look to see what is next.
2. When possible, give your learner choices for the next activity. "Would you like to read a story or color a picture next?"

Classroom
Skills



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Pictorial (Visual) Schedule

To Use: Print, trim, laminate and trim again both the activity panels and the activities you want on your visual schedule. Use velcro dots to make them “stick” to each other. Hang in a conspicuous place at the child’s eye-level.

Included Activities

WAKE UP
 MONTESSORI WORKS
 GO POTTY
 BREAKFAST
 GET DRESSED
 BRUSH TEETH
 PLAY INSIDE
 SNACK TIME
 PLAY OUTSIDE
 SCHOOL
 LUNCH
 TAKE A NAP
 TAKE A BATH
 COLORING
 NIGHT NIGHT
 STORY TIME
 DINNER
 PUT PAJAMAS ON

Start with just one activity panel, then introduce the next one once your learner is familiar with the activity.



IMPORTANT:

Always print with the setting “Fit to Printable Area”

Classroom
Skills





WAKE UP



MONTESSORI WORKS



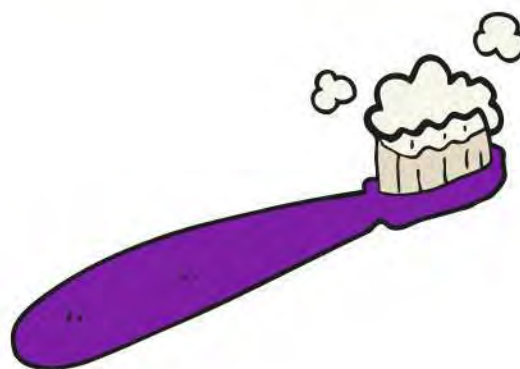
GO POTTY



BREAKFAST



GET DRESSED



BRUSH TEETH



PLAY INSIDE



SNACK TIME



PLAY OUTSIDE



SCHOOL



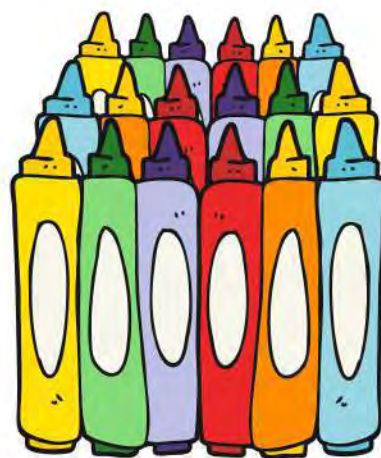
LUNCH



TAKE A NAP



TAKE A BATH



COLORING



NIGHT NIGHT



STORY TIME



DINNER



PUT ON PAJAMAS

Activity Panels

Morning





Afternoon

--

--

--

Evening

--

--

--

Practical Life

Participating in Daily Routines: Nap Time

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A child-sized mat, blanket or bed
- A basket with a few soft, quiet, toys or books
- Variation 1: soft, calming music or nature sounds (optional)

SAFETY: CHILDREN SHOULD ALWAYS BE SUPERVISED, EVEN WHEN NAPPING.

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.
2. Create a calm environment by dimming the lights and minimizing noise.

What to do:

1. Begin by saying to your learner, "It's almost time for our quiet rest. First, we are going to use the bathroom, then we will get our mat/blanket/bed ready and choose a quiet toy."
2. Take your learner to the bathroom. Toilet or diaper.
3. Guide the child to get their mat/blanket, assisting as needed, saying, "Can you bring your mat here?" If at home, say, "It's time for us to go to your bedroom."
4. Help the student prepare their sleeping space.
5. Invite your learner to select one item from the basket, "Now you can choose a quiet toy or book to have with you."
6. Encourage the student to lie down on the mat/blanket/bed, saying, "Let's lie down and rest quietly."
7. Stay nearby to offer gentle reminders using a soft voice. If your student gets up remind them that it's time to rest quietly.

Variation:

1. Play soft, calming music or nature sounds during the resting period.

Families are encouraged to adapt nap time routines to fit their needs while ensuring the child's core needs for rest, gentle transitions, and a calming environment are consistently supported.

Classroom
Skills



Practical Life

Using a Work Mat or Rug

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A small manageable work mat such as a rug or yoga mat
- Variation 1: fabric napkins and napkin rings (optional)

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.

What to do:

1. Say, "We are going to learn how to use a work mat today. The work mat will help define our workspace."
2. Show your learner how to carry the mat, straight up and down with both hands. Say, "This is how to carry your work mat." (Skip for Chowki Table).
3. Walk slowly and carefully to an open space on the floor.
4. Place the mat on the floor. Say, "I am going to unroll the mat so I can do a work on it." Slowly, model how to gently unroll the mat.
5. Next, model how to roll the mat up, saying, "Now I'm going to roll the mat back up." Start with both hands close together in the center of the mat to keep it tight. Slowly spread your hands out as you continue to roll up the mat to maintain control.
6. Invite your learner to practice rolling and unrolling the work mat.
7. Encourage the child to return the work mat to its place, carrying it the same way you modeled in the beginning.

Variation:

1. Have your student practice rolling something smaller, like a cloth napkin. Then, encourage them to slide a napkin ring on to the napkin, securing it.

Classroom
Skills



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Practical Life

Walking Carefully

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Variation 1: a tray (optional)

SAFETY: MAKE SURE THE FLOOR IS FREE OF SPILLS.

Before you begin:

1. Take your student to a safe, open space.

What to do:

1. Introduce the activity by telling your student, "Today we are going to practice walking slowly and carefully. Although it is fun to run and play, sometimes we have to slow down and walk to be safe."
2. Demonstrate how to walk slowly and deliberately, focusing on each step, saying, "See how I'm walking slowly and carefully? I'm paying attention to where my feet are going."
3. Encourage the child to try walking carefully. Remind them to go slowly and pay attention to their feet as they move.
4. If your learner runs, instead of saying, "Don't run," say, "We use walking feet inside."

Variation:

1. Many Montessori activities involve the use of a tray. Demonstrate to your student how to carefully carry a tray, holding it with one hand on each side to keep it balanced and supported while saying, "I need to keep all of the materials on my tray, so I will walk slowly and carefully." Invite your learner to try walking slowly and carefully with the tray.

Classroom
Skills



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Practical Life

Opening and Closing a Door

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A door that is easily accessible and safe for your student to use.
- Variation 1: wooden latches board (optional). [This one](#) is our favorite.

SAFETY: MAKE SURE THE DOOR WON'T SLAM SHUT ON YOUR STUDENT'S FINGERS.

Before you begin:

1. Bring your learner to the door and stand in front of it together.

What to do:

1. Say, "Today we are going to learn how to open and close the door. We close the door gently so it doesn't hurt our fingers or make a loud noise."
2. Show your student how to grip the door handle and turn it, saying, "I'm going to grip the door tightly, and turn the handle like this."
3. Show the child how to push (or pull) the door open, saying, "I'm going to pull the door towards me to open it."
4. Ensure the door is opened wide enough to pass through, saying, "Make sure the door is open far enough to walk through it."
5. Next, say, "Now, I'm going to close the door. I'm going to push it closed slowly and carefully."
6. Make sure the door latches properly. If it doesn't, demonstrate how to give it an extra push, saying, "The door didn't close all the way. I'll give it a little push to make sure that it latches shut."
7. Invite your learner to practice carefully opening and closing the door.

Variation:

1. Once your student is able to successfully twist the knob and pull the door open, and twist the knob and gently push the door closed, introduce different types of locks and latches to them. A fun resource for doing this is the [Melissa & Doug Wooden Latches Board](#).

Classroom Skills



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Practical Life

PART 2

Care of Environment



Practical Life

Folding

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Small, square cloths (like washcloths or napkins) that have thin, easy-to-fold material
- A small basket or tray to hold cloths
- Variation 1: marker or fabric paint (optional)

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.
2. Sit in front of a flat surface with your learner (like a table or hard wood floor).

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Introduce the activity to your learner, saying, "Today, we are going to learn how to fold cloths."
3. Take one cloth out of the basket and place it flat on the surface in front of you and the child.
4. Demonstrate how to bring the top edge of the cloth down to meet the bottom edge.
5. Smooth the fold with your hand.
6. Show your student how to bring the left edge of the cloth over to meet the right edge.
7. Smooth the fold again.
8. Place the folded cloth neatly on the surface in front of you and the child.
9. Invite your learner to try, saying, "Now it's your turn, can you fold this cloth?" Offer encouragement and guidance as needed.

Variation:

1. Use older cloths and draw dashed lines on them with permanent marker or fabric paint to denote where to fold the cloth. You can draw diagonal lines, lines dividing the cloth in 1/3's etc... This provides visual cues for your learner and an opportunity to fold different shapes.

Care of
Environment



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Practical Life

Dusting

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A small duster (feather duster or a soft cloth)
- Variation 1: a small spray bottle with water (optional)

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Introduce the activity, saying, "Today, we are going to learn how to dust."
3. Choose a spot with dust and say to your learner, "This shelf/table/whatever you chose is really dusty. We will dust it, but we need to take everything off of it first."
4. Show your learner how to carefully move the items to a safe spot while dusting. Say, "We will put these somewhere safe, so that they stay safe while we dust."
5. Take the duster out of the basket and demonstrate how to gently dust the surface with the duster. Move the duster in a consistent direction (left to right or up and down), emphasizing the importance of being thorough.
6. Invite the student to try, asking, "Would you like to try dusting now?" Offer guidance if needed but allow the child to do as much as possible on their own.

Variation:

1. If using the spray bottle for slightly damp dusting, spray the duster two times with the spray bottle. Explain to your student that a little moisture helps pick up the dust, but using too much water could make a mess. Demonstrate how to dust, then invite your learner to try it themselves. Have a dry cloth ready for them to spray themselves. Count out loud "One, two" as they spray the cloth.

Care of
Environment



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Practical Life

Sponging

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Small, soft, round sponge
- Two identical bowls or a double pet food bowl
- Paper towels or hand towel for wiping up spills
- Variation 1: food coloring (optional)
- Variation 2: small bucket (optional)

Before you begin:

1. Place two small, identical bowls or a clean double pet bowl on the workspace with the sponge below the bowls.
2. Place a small amount of water in the left hand bowl.

NOTE: The "just right" amount of water will take your child 3-4 squeezes of the sponge to transfer completely.

What to do:

1. Sit at the workspace with the child on your right side.
2. Say, "Today, we are working with a sponge and water."
3. Pick up the sponge and place it in the water in the left-hand bowl.
4. Once again, pick up the sponge, this time moving it to the right-hand bowl, and squeeze the water out.
5. Continue in this manner from left to right until all the water has been transferred.
6. Say, "We moved all the water. Now, let's move it back."
7. Move the water back to the left-hand bowl in the same manner as described above.
8. Invite your learner to transfer the water by sponge.
9. If they spill, calmly work with them to use the paper towels or hand towel to clean up.

Variations:

1. Adding a drop or two of food coloring to the water can help toddlers identify where the water is and is not. This is especially helpful if you are using clear bowls.
2. Show the child how to clean spills on the table using a pail and sponge. Place an empty bucket with a sponge at a level they can reach. When something is spilled on the table, bring the bucket and demonstrate wiping the spill and slowly squeezing the water into the pail. Empty the bucket after each spill is cleaned.

Care of
Environment



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Practical Life

Table Washing

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Small bowl filled with water
- Several sponges or washcloths
- Bar of mild soap
- Small table
- Variation 1: spray bottle (optional)
- Variation 1: squeegee (optional)
- Variation 1: two small cloths (optional)

Before you begin:

1. Gather and prepare necessary materials.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Display the materials and say, "We're going to wash this table today!"
3. Pick up the sponge or washcloth and dip it into the water. Say, "Water helps us get the table clean."
4. Squeeze out excess water to ensure that the sponge is damp. Say, "But too much water will make a mess. I will squeeze the extra water out before I begin."
5. Rub the damp sponge on the soap, creating lather. Say, "Soap helps us get the table clean, too."
6. Demonstrate how to scrub the table.
7. Give the sponge to your learner, inviting them to try.
8. Using a different cloth, dip it in the water, squeeze out the excess and wipe the table to remove the soap residue. Say, "Now, I will remove the soap."
9. Encourage your student to try washing the table.
10. Using the dry cloth, model how to dry the table.
11. Let your learner practice drying the table, making sure they dry the whole surface.

Variation:

1. Gather supplies for window washing: spray bottle with water, squeegee, and 2 small cloths. Spray the window two times, then with the squeegee, start at the top corner and pull the squeegee down in a smooth motion. Wipe the squeegee blade after each stroke. Use the second cloth to dry the window.

Care of
Environment



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Practical Life

Washing Dishes

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A sink or dishwashing bin
- A small pitcher
- A sponge or small dishcloth
- Mild, child-safe dish soap
- A drying rack or clean dish towel
- 2-3 child-sized dishes, cups, and utensils
- A small container for food scraps

SAFETY: BE CAREFUL TO KEEP THE WATER LUKEWARM AND NOT HOT.

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.
2. Prepare sink or dishwashing bin with lukewarm (not hot) soapy water.

Note: When inviting toddlers to help with dishwashing, use sturdy glass dishes (preferably) or plastic.

What to do:

1. Take your learner to the prepared workspace and introduce the activity, saying, "Today we are going to wash dishes!"
2. Show the student how to scrape any leftover food scraps from the dishes into the food scraps container.
3. Take one dish at a time and demonstrate how to wash it with the sponge or dishcloth.
4. Rinse the washed dish with clean running water from the pitcher or sink, or in a separate tub of clean water.
5. Place the rinsed dish on the drying rack or dry with the dishtowel.
6. Invite your student to try, saying, "Would you like to try washing this dish?" Offer gentle guidance and encourage the child to wash, rinse, and dry each item.

Variation:

1. As a variation of the traditional dishwashing activity, toddlers can wash fruits or vegetables using a small basin, a soft brush or sponge, and a bowl of rinse water. This practical life activity introduces care for food and preparation for eating, making the experience meaningful and directly connected to real life.

Care of
Environment



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Practical Life

Sorting Clothes

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Dirty clothes or laundry that needs to be sorted for washing
- Two laundry baskets or bins to sort clothes into
- Variation 1: laundry detergent (optional)

SAFETY: CLOSELY SUPERVISE TODDLERS WHEN USING LAUNDRY DETERGENT TO AVOID INGESTION.

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials and arrange for easy use.

What to do:

1. Take your student to the prepared environment.
2. Introduce the activity, saying, "Today, we're going to sort our dirty clothes so they're ready to be washed. We sort clothes to protect delicate items and so the colors don't run. Sometimes when we wash clothes, the colors can come off one shirt and get on another, like when a red sock makes your white shirt turn pink."
3. Show your learner the basket of dirty clothes. Pick up one item (such as a white shirt) and say, "This is a white shirt. We're going to put all the white clothes in this basket."
4. Continue demonstrating with one or two more items, clearly stating the category. "These are dark pants. Dark clothes go in this basket."
5. Invite your student to participate, saying, "Can you find another white item and put it in the white clothes basket?"
6. Guide them as needed, but allow independence as much as possible. Name each item as they sort it.

Variations:

1. After sorting, you can add a washing activity with one category of clothes. Closely supervise toddlers when using laundry detergent.
2. After clothes have been washed and folded, the toddler can help you sort the clothes into categories to put away.

Sorting improves organizational and fine motor skills. It also refines hand-eye coordination.

Care of
Environment



Practical Life

Tidying Up

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Organization cards (attached)
- Scotch tape
- Designated place for toys (shelves, baskets, etc.)
- Variation 1: child-sized broom and dustpan (optional)
- Variation 2: upbeat children's music (optional)

IMPORTANT:

Always print with the setting "Fit to Printable Area"

Before you begin:

1. Print, laminate and trim the Household Objects Cards (attached).
2. Use the Scotch tape to affix the cards to the designated place for each toy.

What to do:

1. Calmly and gently, say, "It's time to tidy up our play area." (Use a positive tone when speaking.)
2. Choose one toy. Pick it up and say, "This toy (block, dinosaur, play food...) belongs in this basket."
3. Slowly and deliberately walk to the basket and place the toy in its designated spot. Say, "I'm putting the toy in the basket, so it has a place to stay."
4. Hand a toy to your student and say, "Can you put the toy (car, book, puzzle...) back where it belongs?"
5. If your student is unsure, guide them to the correct spot and encourage them to put the toy back themselves.
6. Once your learner seems to understand, observe and allow them to tidy up on their own, asking guiding questions if your student seems unsure.
7. When everything is picked up, say, "Thank you for helping to tidy up!"

Variations:

1. Once the toys are put away, you can introduce sweeping. With a child-sized broom and dustpan, model for your student how to sweep all the debris into one pile, and then into the dustpan to throw away.
2. Make tidying more enjoyable for your learner by incorporating music. Encourage your student to tidy up while singing a special clean up song or as music is playing.

Care of
Environment



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Cars



Blocks



Books



Stuffed Animals



Puzzles



Musical Instruments



Art Supplies



Dinosaurs



Legos



Trains



Animals



Play Food

Practical Life

Gardening

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Small gardening tools (child-sized trowel, watering can, and gardening gloves)
- Small pots for planting
- Small container for soil
- Potting soil
- Large seeds such as beans, peas, or sunflowers

SAFETY: SUPERVISE TODDLERS VERY CLOSELY AS THEY USE THE TROWEL AND REMOVE THE TOOL IF NEEDED.

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials and place on a low table or outdoor workspace.
2. Put a small amount of soil in a separate container that will be easy for your learner to access.

What to do:

1. Say, "Today we are going to plant seeds so we can watch them grow!"
2. Show your student the materials.
3. Slowly and deliberately, explain what each item is for while pointing to it.
4. Demonstrate how to scoop soil into the pot using the trowel. Say, "This soil will be the home for our seeds." Encourage your student to try, helping as needed. Fill pots $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
5. Demonstrate how to make a small hole in the soil with your finger. Say, "This hole is where our seeds will go." Place one or two seeds in the hole and cover with soil. Allow your learner to try planting a seed.
6. Model how to gently water the soil, saying, "We need to give the seeds a little drink so they can grow, but not too much or they won't grow."
7. Explain that plants also need sunlight to grow, saying, "Plants need sunlight to grow, so we put them near a window where the sun can shine on them."

Variations:

1. Slowly and deliberately, demonstrate how to water the garden, emphasizing that overwatering can actually hurt the plants.
2. Harvest your crops with your learner. Use the pincer grasp and work slowly.

Gardening teaches responsibility, fine motor skills, patience & an appreciation for nature.

Care of
Environment



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A photograph of a man with a beard and a young child with blonde hair. The man is holding a dark glass bottle and pouring a yellow liquid into a glass. The child is looking down at the bottle. The background is blurred, showing a kitchen setting.

Practical Life

PART 3

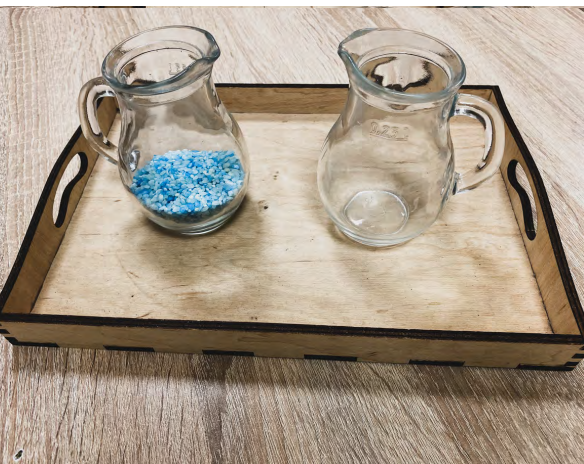
Control of Movement: Basic Skills



Practical Life

Pouring

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Two large, identical containers
- Dry goods for pouring, such as cheerio-sized dry cereal or elbow sized pasta
- Variation 1: pom-poms and/or dry rice (optional)

SAFETY: DO NOT USE RAW BEANS OR LENTILS, AS SOME CAN BE FATAL IF SWALLOWED.

Before you begin:

1. Prepare a workspace with two large, identical containers. Orient the handles so that they face out to both sides, as pictured above.
2. For a left-handed child, fill the container on the left about 1/3 of the way full with the dry goods. For a right-handed child, fill the container on the right. Leave the other container empty.
3. Be prepared for & include your student in cleaning up messes!

What to do:

1. Bring your learner to the prepared workspace.
2. Sit with them and say, "Watch carefully while I pour some cereal/pasta."
3. Grasp the partly full container with your thumb on top and fingers through the handle.
4. Lift both pitchers simultaneously, raising the full one higher than the empty pitcher.
5. Center the pouring spout over the empty pitcher.
6. Pour until all of the contents are transferred.
7. Exaggerate looking into the pitcher as you check to ensure that all of the cereal/pasta is gone.
8. Slowly, set the pitchers down, placing the full one on the side of your learner's dominant hand side.
9. Invite your student to try.

Variation:

1. Use a different or smaller material for pouring, such as pom poms or rice. (These can be picked up inexpensively at your local dollar store).

Movement:
Basic Skills



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Practical Life

Mixing

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Small towel
- Water
- Small, clear cups
- Food coloring (variety of colors)
- Small sponge for spills
- Variation 2: powdered milk or juice (optional)

IMPORTANT:

Always print with the setting "Fit to Printable Area"

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.
2. Lay the small towel across the workspace, beneath the cups and sponge.
3. Fill two of the cups with a small amount of water.
4. Add food coloring to one cup of water and a different color food coloring to the other cup.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Introduce the activity to your learner, saying, "We are going to mix colors today!"
3. Pointing to the cups with the water, say "We are going to mix blue water with red water. It will make a new color when they mix together."
4. Pick up the cup with blue water. Slowly and deliberately, pour into the empty cup. Say "I'm pouring blue water into the empty cup."
5. Repeat with the red water.
6. Observe how the color of the water changes with your student. Say, "Look, red and blue make purple!"
7. Set up the activity again & invite the child to try.

Variations:

1. Include a fourth clear cup with yellow colored water and additional empty cups. Invite your student to see what other colors can be created.
2. Mix a food-safe powder such as powdered milk or juice into water for your student to drink.

This activity could stain clothes and make a mess. We recommend using old clothes and working on a hard surface such as tile.

Movement:
Basic Skills



Basic Color Mixing

**A cheat sheet for the guide*



RED

YELLOW

ORANGE



BLUE

RED

PURPLE



YELLOW

BLUE

GREEN

Practical Life

Whisking

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A large bowl
- Water
- Liquid dish soap
- A whisk
- A small sponge or cloth
- Variation 1: food coloring (optional)
- Variation 2: natural materials such as leaves or flower petals (optional)

SAFETY: DO NOT ALLOW TODDLERS TO DRINK SOAPY WATER.

Before you begin:

1. Gather the necessary materials.
2. Fill the bowl about 1/10 of the way full with water.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Say, "We are going to make bubbles using this whisk!"
3. Add a very small amount of liquid soap to the bowl of water.
4. Slowly and deliberately, demonstrate whisking by moving the whisk around the bowl in a circular direction. Say, "When I whisk the water and soap together, it makes bubbles."
5. Show your learner how to clean up spills with the cloth. Say, "Oh no, some of the water spilled on the table, I'm going to use my cloth to clean it up!"
6. Invite the toddler to make bubbles by whisking, ensuring they wipe up any spills as they happen.

Variations:

1. Add food coloring to the water to make colored bubbles.
2. Take the activity outside and use natural materials like leaves or flower petals to whisk into the water.

Movement:
Basic Skills



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Practical Life

Transferring by Hand

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Two small bowls
- Small, safe objects to transfer such as pom-poms
- Variation: small snack foods such as Cheerios, goldfish, or berries (optional)

The pincer grasp helps toddlers build the finger strength and control they need for important skills like feeding themselves and learning to write.

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.
2. Fill one bowl with the objects to be transferred.
3. Set the bowls in front of your student, with the full bowl on the child's dominant side.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Show your student how to pick up one item at a time using a pincer grasp (thumb and forefinger) while saying, "I am going to use my fingers to move one pom-pom at a time until they are all in the other bowl."
3. Slowly and deliberately, transfer the objects from the full bowl to the empty bowl. Repeat this process a few times to emphasize controlled movements.
4. Invite your learner to try, encouraging them to transfer one object at a time with a focus on accuracy and control. Say, "Now it's your turn! Carefully move one pom-pom to the other bowl with your fingers."
5. Observe without interfering unless the child needs help or gets frustrated.
6. Once all the objects have been transferred, demonstrate how to transfer them back to the original bowl, saying, "Now, let's move all the pom-poms back, one at a time".

Variation:

1. Work with your student to prepare a snack. Provide a few different snack options for your learner, making sure each can be transferred easily with small hands (for example, Cheerios, goldfish, or berries). Put a little of each item into different bowls, keeping one bowl empty for your student's snack. Encourage your student to choose the snack(s) they would like and transfer them to their snack bowl. Enjoy!

Movement:
Basic Skills



Practical Life

Transferring with a Spoon

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Two small bowls
- A small spoon (child-sized, with a wider grip for easy handling)
- A dry, scoopable material (dried pasta, Cheerios, pom-poms, small pebbles, etc.)
- Variation 1: other utensils such as a slotted spoon, a ladle or tongs (optional)

SAFETY: DO NOT USE RAW BEANS OR LENTILS AS SOME CAN BE FATAL IF SWALLOWED.

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.
2. Fill one bowl with the objects to be transferred.
3. Set the bowls in front of your student, with the full bowl on the child's dominant side.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Introduce the materials, saying, "Today, we are going to use a spoon to move this pasta from one bowl to another."
3. Demonstrate how to hold the spoon. Slowly and deliberately, model scooping up pasta from the full bowl. Carefully move the spoon over the empty bowl and drop the pasta into it.
4. Invite your learner to try, saying, "Now it is your turn to try spooning the pasta."
5. Allow the child to work at their own pace. Do not correct errors immediately. Instead, offer gentle guidance on their technique (only if needed).
6. Once the toddler has moved all the pasta from one bowl to the other, encourage them to move it back.

Variations:

1. Once your student is comfortable using the spoon, introduce other utensils such as a slotted spoon, a ladle or tongs. The ladle is excellent to use with transferring water.
2. Use colored materials and have your student sort the objects into bowls of matching colors.

Movement:
Basic Skills



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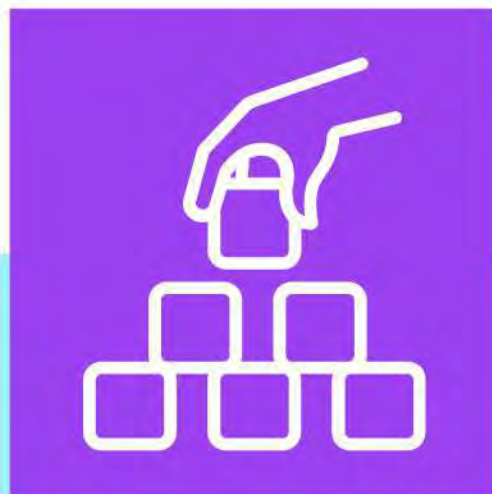
Practical Life

PART 4

Control of Movement: Fine Motor Skills



Fine Motor



Fine motor activities require children to use the small muscles of their hands, fingers and thumbs, thereby developing the pincer grip. This action of closing the thumb and index finger to hold on to an object is how humans learn to dress, undress, grasp silverware, turn pages of books and hold a pencil properly.

Development of fine motor skills - which begin to form at a very young age and get better with practice - helps kids gain independence with activities of daily life such as dressing, feeding and writing. The ability to independently accomplish these tasks builds self-confidence, self-esteem and competency, which set the stage for an enjoyable and successful primary education experience.

Practical Life

Hand-Eye Coordination

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Empty container with a lid (a coffee can, box, etc.)
- A tool to cut a hole in the lid (scissors or craft knife)
- Small objects that fit through the hole (wooden blocks, large beads, or pom-poms)
- Variation 1: colorful paint, markers or crayons

SAFETY: TODDLERS CAN HURT THEMSELVES ON JAGGED EDGES. MAKE SURE YOUR HOLE IS SMOOTH.

Before you begin:

1. Clean the container, if necessary, and carefully cut a hole in the lid. The hole should be just large enough for the small objects to pass through. Make sure the edges of the hole are smooth and safe.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Introduce the activity to your learner, saying, "Today we are going to complete a work with this container and these blocks."
3. Pick up a block using a pincer grip and say, "I am going to put this block inside the hole. Now the block is in the container!"
4. Repeat with the remaining blocks.
5. Once all the blocks are in the container, say, "I put all the blocks in the container, now I'm going to take them out." Using a pincer grip, model how to open the container. Then, slowly and deliberately, remove each block, one at a time.
6. Encourage your learner to try putting the objects in the container.

Variation:

1. Cut 3-4 small holes in the lid of a container. Paint or color around each hole with a different color (make sure the colors are vibrant and clear). Collect pom-poms that match the colors of the holes and demonstrate how to put each pom-pom into the hole with the matching color. Use a pincer grip!

Sorting improves organizational and fine motor skills. It also refines hand-eye coordination.

Fine Motor



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Practical Life

Clamping Clothespins

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Small basket or bucket
- Large clothespins (link on supply list)
- Safe outdoor area with plenty of leaves

SAFETY: SUPERVISE YOUR TODDLER. CLOTHESPINS CAN PINCH IF THEIR FINGERS GET STUCK.

Before you begin:

1. Place clothespins into small basket or bucket.

What to do:

1. Take your learner and the basket/bucket of clothespins to a safe, outdoor area with plenty of leaves. On your way, say, "Today, we will be working with clothespins!"
2. Say, "This is a clothespin." Slowly, show your student how to open and close the clothespin. Allow them to explore the clothespins with their senses: through sight, smell, touch, and so on. If you want to redirect their tasting of the clothespins say, "Clothespins are for clamping," and move on to the next step immediately.
3. Take a leaf from the ground and slowly demonstrate how to clamp a clothespin onto it. Say, "I am clamping the clothespin onto a leaf."
4. Invite your learner to clamp a clothespin on to a leaf. Allow them to repeat this activity as desired.
5. At the end of the activity, demonstrate how to unclamp the clothespin and place it back into the bucket. Say, "We put them on the leaves. Now let's unclamp them and move them back."

Variations:

1. Invite your learner to clamp two or three leaves together with the clothespins.
2. Ask the child to place a specific number of clothespins on a leaf. Count aloud with them.
3. Ask your student to find various colors of leaves, then help them sort the leaves by color. Talk with them about the differences between the leaves: some are drier or wetter, some are larger or smaller, and so on. Use this time to build vocabulary such as wet, dry, large, small, brown, green and so on.

Fine Motor



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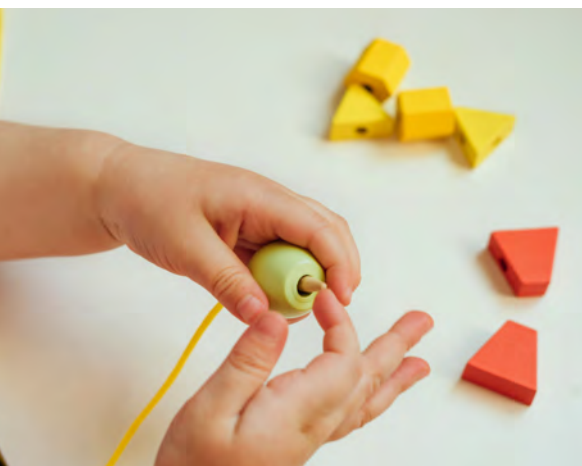
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Practical Life

Stringing Beads

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Large wooden beads (1 inch or larger)
- Thick shoelace or string with plastic end
- Basket or tray
- Variation: muffin tin, colorful pom-poms, printed, & laminated & trimmed template on the following page (attached) - optional

SAFETY: NEVER LEAVE TODDLERS UNATTENDED WITH A PIECE OF STRING OR BEADS.

Before you begin:

1. Place beads and string in a tray on the workspace.
2. Tie one end of the string into a knot so the beads don't slip off that end.

What to do:

1. Slowly demonstrate how to lace the bead while saying, "This is a bead. I am putting it on the string."
2. Invite your learner to string the bead on the thread.
3. After they complete beading, show them how to remove the beads from the string and place them back in the basket. Say, "We put them all on the string. Now let's move them back to the basket."

NOTE: Your student may need assistance holding the bead while they are learning to thread at the beginning.

Variation:

1. Place the printed, laminated and trimmed color circles into each of six spaces on a muffin tin. Place a small bowl with matching-colored pom-poms beside the muffin tin. Slowly, demonstrate how to sort by color. Say, "This is a pom-pom. I am sorting it by color."

NOTE: Begin with 3 pom-poms of each color and add more as the child becomes comfortable.



Sorting improves organizational and fine motor skills. It also refines hand-eye coordination.

Fine Motor



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Practical Life

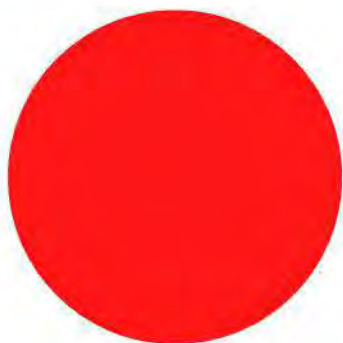
Stringing Beads, Variation Template

24-36 months

Color Sorting:

Instructions: Print, laminate and trim the circles below. Place them into each of six spaces on a muffin tin. Place a small bowl with matching-colored pom-poms beside the muffin tin. Slowly demonstrate how to sort by color. Say, "This is a pom-pom. I am sorting it by color." You should begin with 3 colors and 3 pom-poms of each color. Add more as your learner becomes comfortable.

IMPORTANT:
Always print with
the setting
"Fit to Printable
Area"



Practical Life

Lacing

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Lacing template, printed, laminated, hole punched and trimmed (attached)
- Shoelace or string with plastic end
- Variation: pipe cleaners and plastic strainer

SAFETY: NEVER LEAVE TODDLERS UNATTENDED WITH A PIECE OF STRING LONGER THAN 7".

Before you begin:

1. String a shoelace through the first hole in the prepared lacing template and tie a knot at the end.

What to do:

1. Say, "This shoelace is for lacing." Slowly and purposefully, show your learner how to put the end of the shoelace through the prepared lacing template.
2. Allow the child to explore the shoelace with their senses through sight, smell, touch and so on. If you want to redirect their tasting of the shoelace, say, "This shoelace is for lacing," and move on to the next step.
3. Pull the shoelace through to the end so that the knot presses against the lacing template slightly.
4. Slowly, demonstrate turning the card over and lacing the shoelace through the second hole.
5. Invite learner child to try lacing the lacing template.
6. At the beginning, they will need you to hold the lacing template while they attempt to lace it.
7. Allow them to practice in a disordered fashion; it's expected and age appropriate. After they have built confidence, you may encourage them to lace in a more organized manner.
8. At the end of the activity, pull the thread out for them saying, "We finished lacing. Now we will unlace."

Variation:

1. Using pipe cleaners and a small plastic strainer, show your student how to lace the pipe cleaners through the holes in the strainer.

Fine Motor



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Practical Life

Lacing Template

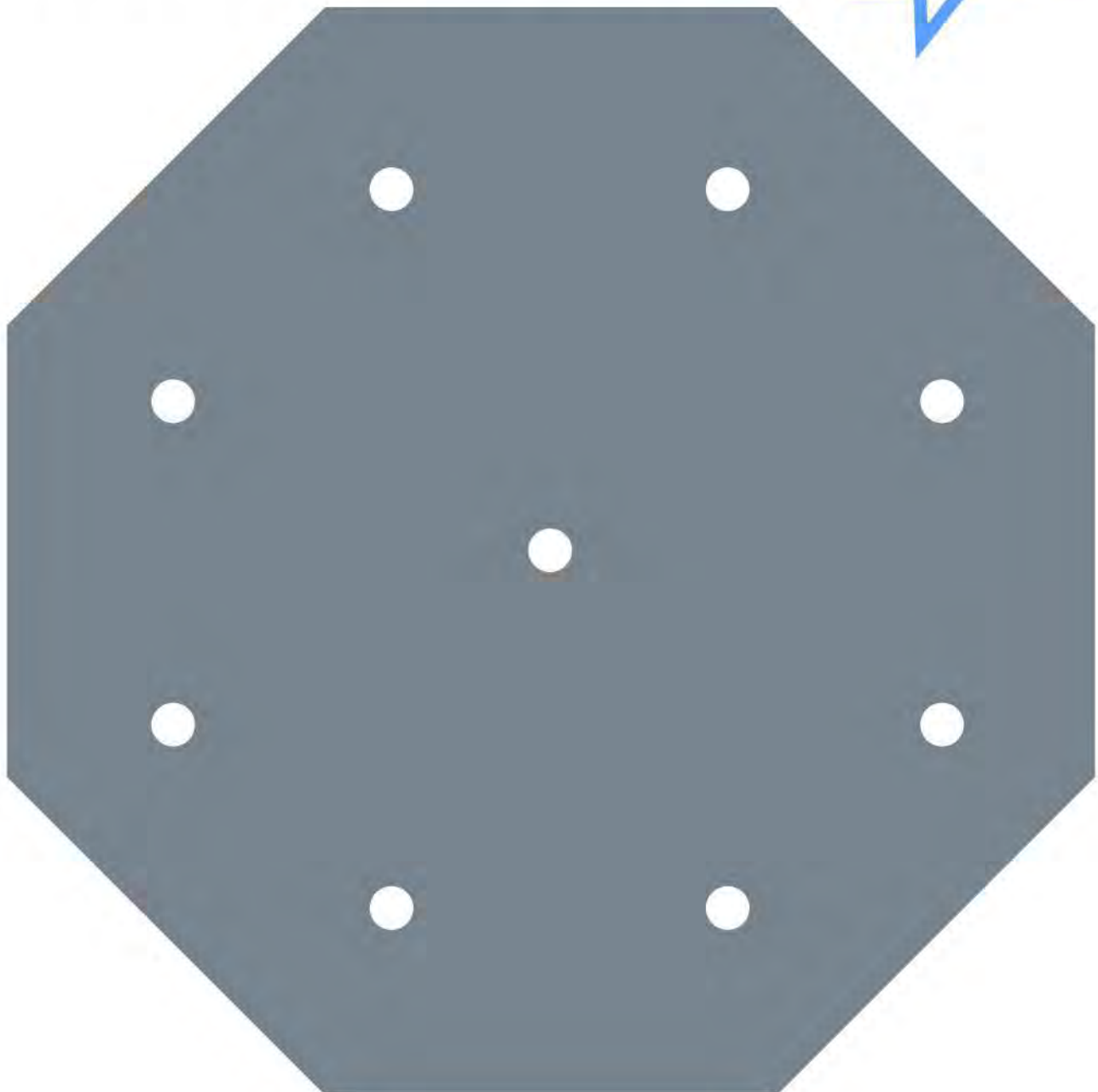
24-36 months

Lacing:

Print out the lacing template below on card stock. Then, laminate and punch holes through the white spots using a hole punch. Trim the laminated cardstock page to the size of the octagon, removing all words and white space.

IMPORTANT:

Always print with
the setting
"Fit to Printable
Area"



Practical Life

Hammering Pegs

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Wooden hammer and peg set (link on supply list)
- Rubber, woven or thick cloth mat to reduce noise from hammering (optional, but good for Mom's sanity)
- Variation: white computer paper, colorful flowers, & wooden hammer (optional)

SAFETY: ALWAYS USE A WOODEN HAMMER WITH THESE ACTIVITIES.

Before you begin:

1. Ensure all of the pegs are in the same upright position and are ready to be hammered down.
2. Place the hammer and peg set on a mat to reduce noise.

What to do:

1. Using simple language tell your learner, "Now, we are going to hammer the pegs."
2. Take the hammer in your hand and begin slowly tapping the first peg. Continue until the first peg has reached the bottom surface.
3. Continue in this manner, completing all of the pegs. If your student is excited to begin, feel free to complete only two pegs out of the set. Say, "I will finish hammering two pegs and then it will be your turn."
4. Flip the set over and invite the child to hammer the pegs through.
5. If your learner doesn't hammer a peg through all of the way, you can encourage task completion by asking, "Did this peg reach the floor/table?"
6. When they have completed the set, encourage them to flip the set over and begin again.

Variation:

1. Invite your student to place colorful flowers on a sheet of white paper. Model hammering the flower onto the paper. Then, hold the paper steady for them as they hammer the flowers onto the paper. Say, "Our hammering will move the flower's color to the paper." When ready, ask your learner to remove the petals from the paper to reveal the transfer of color.

Hammering involves fine motor, gross motor & visual-spatial processing skills. It also teaches cause and effect.

Fine Motor



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Practical Life

Fastening Bolts

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Nuts and bolts driver board (link on supply list)
- Small bowl
- Variation: 3 jars with lids that screw on (optional)
 - Note: All jars should be small enough to fit easily into your learner's hand.

SAFETY: DO NOT LEAVE TODDLERS UNATTENDED WITH NUTS, BOLTS, DRIVER BOARD OR GLASS JARS.

Before you begin:

1. Place the nuts and bolt set on the table.
2. Ensure that all nuts are matched to the correctly sized bolt and loosely fastened.

NOTE: Many sets come with a screwdriver or Allen wrench. Please remove such tools before you begin.

What to do:

1. Using simple language, tell the child, "Today, we are going to do a work with nuts and bolts."
2. Work from left to right, beginning with the largest bolt.
3. Place one hand on the base and the other hand on the nut, then slowly unscrew the nut.
4. Place the nut in a small bowl.
5. If desired, you may offer simple instructions explaining the process as you work, i.e. "I am unscrewing the nut."
6. After removing all the nuts, slowly place the nuts back on the bolts in order from largest to smallest.
7. Allow your student to unscrew the largest nut.
8. Continue until all nuts have been moved to the bowl.
9. Ask your learner to screw them back on.
10. Toddlers may need help threading the nuts as they put them back on, but don't help until asked or frustration is reached.

Variation:

1. Using a set of 3 small glass or plastic jars with lids, show your student how to unscrew each lid until all lids are removed. Allow your learner to replace the lids while discovering which lid fits with each jar.

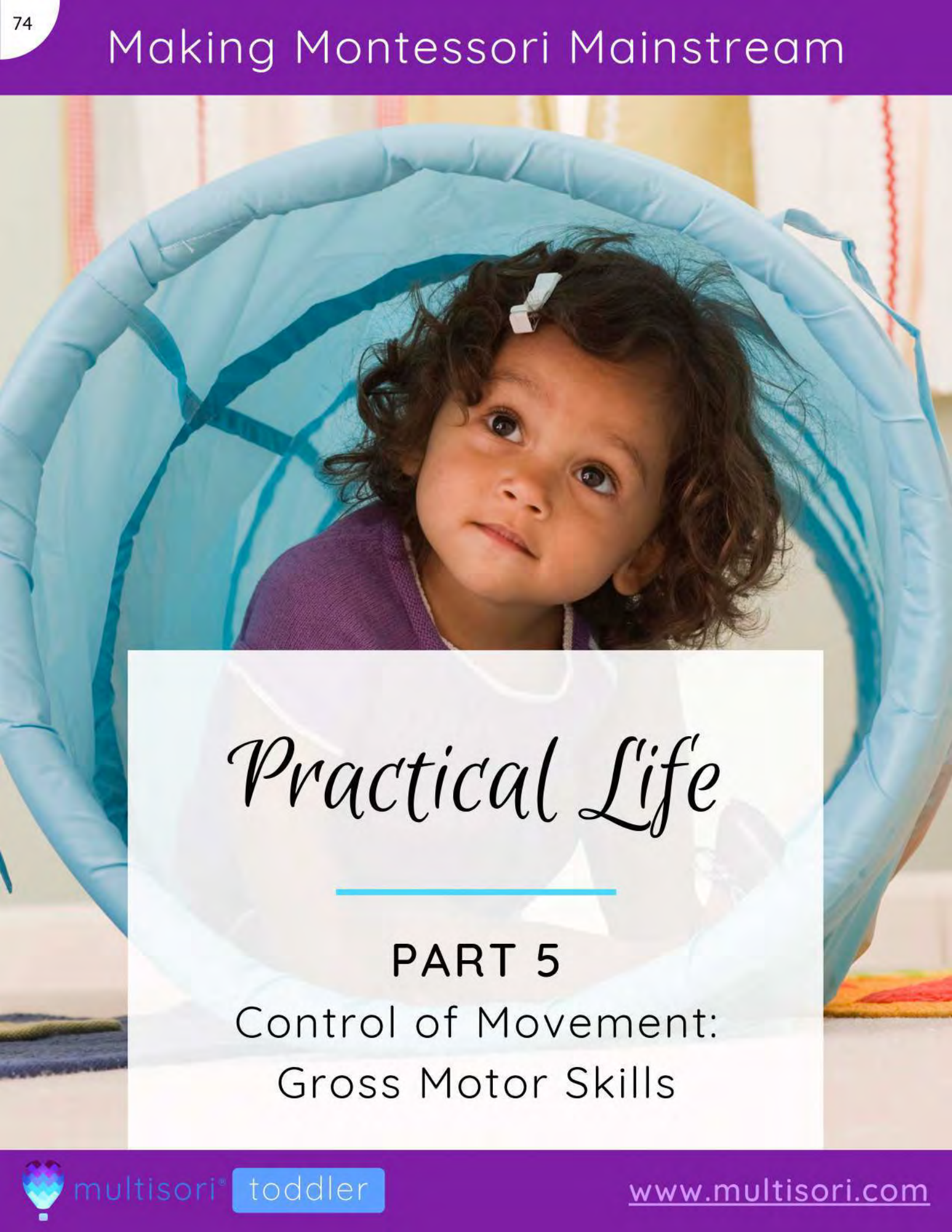
Montessori guides refrain from intervention until a child reaches a point of frustration because it helps children develop self-regulation and problem-solving skills.

Fine Motor



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A young child with dark, curly hair and a small white clip is sitting in a light blue bouncer. The child is looking upwards and to the right with a curious expression. The bouncer has a blue fabric interior with a darker blue pattern. The background is softly blurred, showing hints of a room with colorful curtains.

Practical Life

PART 5

Control of Movement: Gross Motor Skills



Gross Motor



Gross motor activities require children to use the large muscles of the body, such as the arms, legs and torso. Practicing gross motor skills helps children learn how to control and coordinate their body movements.

Development of gross motor skills enables children to perform everyday functions, such as rolling over, walking, running and jumping. Naturally, these abilities open the doors to important experiences such as participating in sports and socializing through play.

I encourage you to supplement the activities offered here with real life opportunities, such as carrying groceries and vacuuming. This will help your learner feel like a strong, capable and important part of the family or group.

Practical Life

Balance

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Colorful tape
- Variation 1: small Beanie Baby or bean bag (optional)
- Variation 2: deep spoon and large pom-pom (optional)

SAFETY: NEVER LEAVE TODDLERS UNATTENDED WITH BALL OR POM-POMS. IT'S A CHOKING HAZARD.

Before you begin:

1. Using colorful tape, place a straight line on the floor. Make the line approximately 4-5 feet long.

What to do:

1. Invite the child to join you at the line on the floor.
2. Say, "This is a straight line. We are going to walk on the line."
3. Beginning at one end of the line, hold your arms out and place one foot in front of the other. Slightly exaggerate your movements, so your learner can see that you are using your arms to help you balance.
4. Invite your student to walk the line.
5. Allow them to practice as much as desired.
6. When the child has mastered walking the straight line, create a wide circle with colorful tape (4-5 feet wide) and show them how to walk along the circumference of the circle. (Consider setting this all to music, and walking both the line and the circle to the beat of the music.)

Variations:

1. Using a small, flat stuffed animal such as a Beanie Baby or a small bean bag, repeat the steps of this activity, this time with your learner balancing the stuffed animal or bean bag on their head.
2. Using a deep spoon, have your student balance a large pom-pom in the spoon as they walk the line and/or circle.

Developing balance helps children learn to control and manage their bodies.

Gross Motor 



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Practical Life

Walking Up and Down Stairs

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Stairs
- Comfortable clothing that does not encumber climbing
- Variation: a jungle gym ladder or Pikler Triangle (optional)

SAFETY: PLEASE USE A SAFETY GATE UNTIL THE CHILD IS CONFIDENT WALKING ON THE STAIRS.

Before you begin:

1. Ensure your student is wearing clothing that won't trip them.

What to do:

1. Bring your learner to the stairs.
2. Say, "We are going to walk up the stairs."
3. Placing your student's hand on the banister, say, "This is the banister. We hold it when we walk on the stairs."
4. Stand behind the child as they climb the stairs, holding their free hand lightly in yours.
5. Encourage them to place both feet onto the first step before moving onto the second step.
6. Continue, one step at a time, until you reach the top.
7. When you have reached the top, have your learner turn around to descend the stairs.
8. Stand in front of them now, facing them. Next, you will walk down the stairs backwards.
9. Remind your learner to put their hand on the banister while you hold their free hand lightly.
10. Face the child as you descend backwards in order to block them from falling. (This is critical!)
11. As they descend, ensure that they bring both feet to each step before moving onto the following step.

Variation:

1. Use a jungle gym ladder or Pikler Triangle for this activity. Place the ladder on a slight angle. If you use a Pikler triangle, no changes to the traditional setup are needed. Stand behind your student as they bring both hands to the first bar at shoulder height, then both feet to the lowest bar before ascending the next bar. As they descend, make sure they stay facing the ladder or Pikler triangle.

Gross Motor



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Practical Life

Climbing

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Assorted pillows (of various sizes and firmness)
- Cushions (couch cushions, floor cushions)
- Soft blanket or rug (optional)
- Variation: play structure (optional)

SAFETY: MAKE SURE YOUR OBSTACLE COURSE IS NOT ON HARD FLOORING LIKE TILE OR HARDWOOD.

Before you begin:

1. Clear a spacious area on the floor.
2. Arrange pillows and cushions in a line or simple course. You can create small hills, tunnels, or steppingstones. If you want to consider some of our favorite resources, click [here](#).

What to do:

1. Say, "We're going to have an adventure on our very own obstacle course today!"
2. Show your learner how to navigate the course by climbing over a pillow, through the tunnel, and by using cushions as steppingstones.
3. Let your student explore the course at their own pace, offering gentle guidance and support as needed.
4. If the child seems hesitant, offer encouragement by saying, "You can do it! I'm right here to help you if you need it."
5. As your learner becomes more confident, you can rearrange the obstacles to create new challenges.
6. Always supervise your student closely to ensure their safety.

Variation:

1. Both indoor and outdoor play structures are a great opportunity to practice climbing. If you don't have one at home, you can take your learner to a nearby park. Begin by demonstrating how to safely climb up the structure, using both hands and feet. Emphasize the importance of holding on tight. Encourage your student to try, spotting them closely to prevent falls. Integrate math by counting the number of steps they climb.

Gross Motor



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Practical Life

Stacking

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A variety of blocks, boxes or nesting cups
- A hard, flat surface to use as a workspace

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.
2. Arrange the blocks, boxes or nesting cups in order from largest to smallest.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your learner on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Show the boxes, blocks, or nesting cups to your student. Say, "Today, we are going to stack these blocks from largest to smallest."
3. Slowly and deliberately, demonstrate stacking the blocks for the child, using care to stack them carefully and gently. Say, "I'll start with the largest block."
4. After stacking all the blocks, unstack them and set them back on the workspace so they are ready for your student. Say, "When I unstack the blocks, I'll start with the smallest block."
5. Invite your learner to stack the items in the same way, from largest to smallest.
6. After your student has stacked the items, allow them to explore the items freely, letting them touch, hold, and manipulate the items as they would like.

Variations:

1. Place the items around the room and ask your student to get the largest item, smallest item, or item of a specific color to stack.
2. Once the toddler is familiar with the activity, ask them to arrange the items from largest to smallest before beginning the task.

Stacking objects contributes to toddlers' cognitive and physical development. It enhances fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, spatial reasoning, and problem-solving abilities.

Gross Motor



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Practical Life

Bean Bag Tossing

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- 2-3 bean bags
- A large open basket (example: laundry basket)
- Variation 1: small Beanie Babies or stuffed animals (optional)
- Variation 2: colorful tape (optional)

SAFETY: ENSURE THAT TODDLERS DON'T THROW BEAN BAGS AT PEOPLE, PETS OR OBJECTS.

Before you begin:

1. Gather supplies.
2. Take supplies to an open space where you have room to throw the bean bags.
3. Place a large, open basket on the floor.

What to do:

1. Stand alongside your learner, about 1-2 feet away from the basket. Say, "We are going to practice tossing the bean bags into the basket."
2. Demonstrate throwing a bean bag into the basket.
3. Hand one bean bag to your student and say, "Now, it's your turn to toss the bean bag." Repeat until all bean bags have been tossed into the basket.
4. Say, "Now, we can collect the bean bags and toss them into the basket again."
5. Encourage your student to collect the bean bags they have thrown.
6. Repeat as desired.

Note: if it is difficult for your toddler to get the bean bag into the basket, bring them closer to the basket.

Variations:

1. As an alternative to using bean bags, you can follow the same directions on the left using small stuffed animals.
2. Once your learner has mastered tossing the bean bags into the basket from 1-2 feet away, set up a challenge for them. Simply place 3 lines of colorful tape on the ground in 1-foot intervals (two feet away from the basket, then three, then four). Start at the first line. When the child is able to toss the bean bags into the basket from the first line, move them to the second line. Continue for at least three lines.

Gross Motor



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Practical Life

Kicking

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Ball
- Large, open space suitable for kicking a ball

SAFETY: AT THIS TIME, YOU MAY WANT TO TELL YOUR LEARNER WHAT IS SAFE AND UNSAFE TO KICK.

Before you begin:

1. It is best to practice kicking outdoors or in a room designated for use of a ball in order to model the appropriate place to use a ball. Once you identify an appropriate space, take your ball and your student there.

What to do:

1. Put the ball directly in front of you and say, "I am going to kick the ball."
2. In an exaggerated way, draw your foot back and slowly kick the ball.
3. Say, "Look, I kicked the ball, and it moved over there."
4. Walk over to the ball and bring it to your student.
5. Say, "Now, it's your turn to kick the ball."

Variation:

1. When the child has mastered kicking the ball, invite them to kick the ball to you. Begin by standing 2-3 feet apart and kick the ball back and forth. As your learner becomes more comfortable, take a few steps away from each other to make the distance greater.

Gross Motor



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Practical Life

Jumping

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Variation 1: small, child-sized, indoor trampoline with handrails (optional). [This one](#) is our favorite.
- Variation 2: rain boots, rain jacket, & rain pants (optional)

SAFETY: DON'T LET TODDLERS JUMP ON A BED, COUCH, TABLE, CHAIR OR ANY OTHER ELEVATED SURFACE.

Before you begin:

1. It is best to practice jumping in an open area, either barefoot or with secure shoes on. Once you identify an appropriate space, take your student there.

What to do:

1. Facing your learner, say with excitement, "Today, we are going to practice jumping with two feet!"
2. Slowly and deliberately, bend your knees and jump up, landing on both of your feet at the same time. Use your arms to propel yourself and do so deliberately.
3. Invite your student to try to jump.
4. If your toddler is unable to jump with two feet simultaneously, it may be helpful to hold their hands while they practice.
5. Once they have jumped, say, "You jumped with two feet! You did it!" in order to reinforce their action.
6. Invite them to try to jump again.
7. Repeat as desired.

Variations:

1. If your child is unable to jump with two feet together, use a small trampoline to help them better feel the rhythm of jumping. Instruct them to hold on to the handrails while they jump.
2. Kids love jumping in rain puddles. Seeing the water move as they jump can help them to understand the rhythm of jumping and understand the natural world.

Giving toddlers the opportunity to have sensory experiences like these helps develop integrated senses.

Gross Motor



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Practical Life

Rolling

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Comfortable clothing that allows movement
- Variation 1: pillows or blankets (optional)
- Variation 2: hill with a gentle slope (optional)



Rolling allows children to interact with their environment and use their movements to achieve a goal.

SAFETY: ALWAYS CLEAR THE AREA BEFORE ROLLING.

Before you begin:

1. Dress your student in clothing that won't get tangled or otherwise trip them up as they roll on the floor.
2. Clear a large area of the floor where your learner can roll unobstructed.

What to do:

1. Bring the toddler to the area you've cleared and designated for rolling.
2. Say, "I am going to show you how to roll on the floor."
3. Have your learner stand and watch as you show them how to roll, dictating what you are doing as you slowly roll.
4. Beginning on your back, say, "Now, I am on my back."
5. Lift your leg and arm to cross over your body to roll onto your stomach. Tell your child, "I am on my stomach now."
6. From your stomach, push up with your hands and feet to return to your back. Say, "Now, I am on my back again. I rolled over!"
7. Invite your student to join you in rolling on the floor.
8. If they are unable to roll independently, you may offer gentle assistance. Before assisting, ask the toddler, "Would you like me to help you?" and wait for their reply.

Variations:

1. Create an obstacle course using soft objects (pillows or blankets) to roll between.
2. Take your student outside and find a hill with a gentle slope. Show them how to roll down the hill using the same steps as rolling inside. Be sure to add that the gentle slope will help them roll more easily - and possibly faster - than a flat surface.

Gross Motor



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Practical Life

Running

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Variation 1: paper cut into a flag shape or other marker to use outside, on the ground. You can use household items for this as well (optional).

SAFETY: AVOID RUNNING ON HARD SURFACES SUCH AS PAVEMENT WHILE YOUR CHILD LEARNS TO RUN.

Before you begin:

1. Put sneakers or other secure shoes on your toddler.
2. Choose a wide-open place to run; outdoors is ideal.

What to do:

1. Tell your learner, "We are going to practice running."
2. Demonstrate running for your student.
3. Hold hands with your toddler and say, "Let's run together!"
4. Run slowly with them.
5. If your learner falls while running, address it calmly, saying, "You fell down. Are you ok?" If they begin to cry, offer them language for how they may be feeling, "Were you scared when you fell down?" You can also validate their experience, saying, "I fall down sometimes, too, and it's no fun at all". Often, children react to the adult's reaction as much as their own feelings. If your toddler is unable to calm down, try again another day.
6. Tend to any cuts, scrapes or bruises. Narrate what you're doing and why. For example, say, "You got a small cut on your knee, so I am applying a band-aid to stop the bleeding."

Variation:

1. Once your learner is comfortable running, set up two points, marking each with a flag. Place them between 5 and 15 feet apart, increasing the distance over time. Invite your toddler to run back and forth, touching each flag as they do. This is a good opportunity to provide vocabulary such as long, longer, longest, short, shorter, shortest, fast, faster, fastest, slow, slower and slowest.

Gross Motor



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Practical Life

Scrubbing

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Small bowl filled with water
- Small sponge or scrubbing brush
- Bar of mild soap
- Small cloths for rinsing and drying
- Item or surface to scrub such as a toy or small table

Before you begin:

1. Gather and prepare necessary supplies.
2. Set up this activity over a place that can safely get wet.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Show your learner the materials, saying, "We're going to learn how to clean this toy today! We'll use water, soap, and a sponge."
3. Slowly and deliberately take the sponge or brush and dip it into the water. Squeeze out excess water.
4. Then, rub the damp sponge on the soap to create a lather.
5. Now demonstrate how to hold the sponge and scrub the item in a circular motion.
6. Next, take a dry cloth, dip it in the water, squeeze out the excess, and wipe the item to remove the soap.
7. Finally, use a dry cloth to model how to dry the item.
8. Give a sponge or brush to the child and invite them to try, saying, "Now, it's your turn to clean a toy!"
9. Slowly, go through the steps with your learner. Allow them to practice and repeat as desired.

Variation:

1. This activity can be completed outside! Set up a wash station with a tub of soapy water, a tub of clean water for rinsing, dry cloths and some scrub brushes. Your learner can clean and dry outdoor toys or items found in nature, such as rocks.

Scrubbing helps toddlers develop responsibility and hand-eye coordination in addition to gross motor skills.

Gross Motor



Practical Life

Caring for Animals

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Caring for Animals Cards (attached)
- A toy animal (stuffed dog, plastic cat)

SAFETY: CLOSELY SUPERVISE TODDLERS INTERACTING WITH ANIMALS TO ENSURE SAFETY.

Before you begin:

1. Print, laminate, and trim Caring for Animals cards.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Say, "We have some special cards that show us how to take care of Doggy!"
3. Choose one card and describe what it shows. For example, you might say, "This card shows us feeding Doggy."
4. Pick up the toy animal while pretending to feed it and say, "Let's feed Doggy!"
5. Invite your learner to try, saying, "Now, it is your turn! Can you find the card that shows brushing?" Provide support to your student if needed.
6. Encourage your student to pick up the toy animal and mimic brushing. Say "Good job brushing Doggy! You're being so gentle."
7. Continue with the other cards, one at a time, using simple language to describe each activity.

Variations:

1. If possible, involve your toddler in simple, supervised care tasks of a real animal.
2. Once your learner is familiar with the cards, have them put them in the correct order to show a complete care routine. (Water, food, bath, brush, and petting/attention). If this is a challenge, use the cards as sequence cards first, then ask the toddler to order them.

Gross Motor



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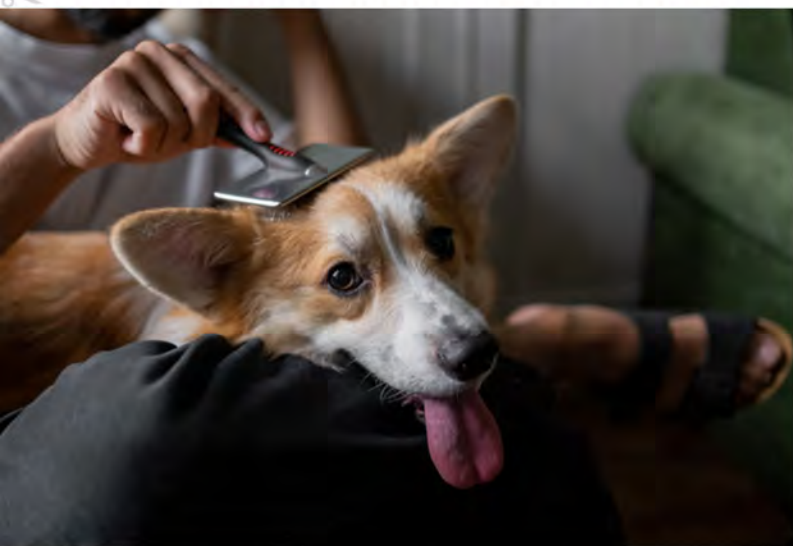
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Caring for Animals



IMPORTANT:
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the setting
"Fit to Printable
Area"



A young child with curly hair is shown in profile, eating a strawberry. The child is wearing a blue shirt with yellow trim. The background is blurred, showing colorful shapes. A white text box is overlaid on the image.

Practical Life

PART 6

Care of Person





Care of Person

Toddlers love to practice independence, within the safety of a familiar environment, with loving caregivers. They are encouraged and proud when adults trust in their innate ability to perform challenging activities. By allowing toddlers to care for themselves and their environment, we give them a sense of confidence which will stay with them for the rest of their lives.



Practical Life

Using a Cubby

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Toddler-height cubby
 - In a home environment, this could be a shipping box, a shoebox, a drawer or a shelf
- A small, lightweight bag that fits inside the cubby
- An item to place in the bag such as a small toy or book

SAFETY: MAKE SURE THE CUBBY IS CLOSE TO THE CHILD'S EYE-LEVEL.

Before you begin:

1. Gather and prepare necessary materials.

What to do:

1. Invite your learner to the cubby area.
2. Show them the bag and the item. Say, "When we get to school, we put all of our things in our cubby for the day. Today, we are going to learn how to carry our bag to our cubby and how to put our things away inside the cubby."
3. Open the bag and show your student the inside. Say "We can use this bag to carry our belongings. Let's put this toy in the bag."
4. Slowly and deliberately, pick up the toy or book and place it in the bag.
5. Show your student how to hold the bag by its handles. Then, lift the bag and carry it to the cubby.
6. Model how to place the bag inside the cubby space, and make sure the bag is neatly placed.
7. Invite your student to try the activity. Guide them through each step and offer assistance as needed.
8. Repeat as desired.

Variation:

1. Once your student is comfortable placing the bag in the cubby, include an additional step where they take the item out of the bag and put it in a designated place inside the cubby (like a bin, shelf, or hook). This spot can be marked with a picture to clearly show the student where to place the item.

Care of Person



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Practical Life

Putting on a Coat

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Adult coat with zipper
- Child coat with zipper
- Variation: scarf (optional)

Note: Toddlers cannot put on a coat as an adult would. Here, we will give steps suited for a toddler.

Before you begin:

1. Gather all necessary materials.

What to do:

1. Bring your toddler to an open area and say, "We are going to practice putting our coats on. We put our coats on before we go outside when it's cold."
2. Place your coat at your feet, with the neck/hood at your feet and the waist further away from you (upside down).
3. Reach down and place your hands in both sleeves of the adult coat.
4. With an upward motion, lift the coat up and over your head to get the coat on your body.
5. Invite your learner to try, saying, "I put on my coat, would you like to try?"
6. Help your student by laying the coat at their feet with the hood/neck next to their feet.
7. Instruct the child in how to put the coat on using slow directions.

Variation:

1. Invite your child to join you on the floor. Place a scarf at your feet. Bend down to place one hand on either side of the scarf, about shoulder distance apart. In a sweeping motion lift the scarf up and over your head to place the scarf at your neck. Place the scarf at your child's feet and Invite them to practice.

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Practical Life

Hanging Up a Coat

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A child-sized coat or jacket
- A low, sturdy hook that is easily accessible for the child.
- Variation: small hand towel (optional)

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.

What to do:

1. Introduce the activity, saying, "Today we are going to practice hanging your coat on a hook. We hang up our coats after we go inside and take it off."
2. Lay the coat on a clean, flat surface and orient the coat so the collar is facing up and the inside is visible (if necessary, unzip or unbutton the coat so it is open).
3. Point out the loop inside the collar of the coat, saying, "We are going to hang your coat on the hook using this loop."
4. Pick up the coat by the loop and place it over the hook, adjusting the coat so it hangs properly.
5. Next, model how to take the coat off the hook, saying, "To take the coat off the hook, hold the back of the collar and lift up."
6. Say, "Now it's your turn to try!"
7. Encourage your student to practice hanging up and taking down the coat. Repeat as desired.

Variation:

1. Demonstrate how to hang a bath towel or washcloth on a hook. (A washcloth may be easier for little hands.) Say, "First, I am going to find the long side of the towel." Model identifying the long side of the towel to your student. Next, using a pincer grasp, grab the middle of the long side of the towel and hang it on the hook, while saying, "Then, I am going to place the towel on the hook." Invite your learner to try. Repeat as desired.

Care of Person 



Practical Life

Putting on socks

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Adult socks
- Thin toddler socks
- Variation: wooden dowel and soft ponytail holders/rubber bands (optional)

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary supplies.
2. Make sure you and your learner have bare feet.
3. Sit down on the floor with the socks and your learner.

What to do:

1. Tell your learner, "Today, we are going to practice putting socks on. We put our socks on before we put our shoes on."
2. Slowly and deliberately, bend your knee so you can reach your foot. Say, "I'm bending my knee so I can reach my foot."
3. Take one sock in your hand and place a thumb on the inside of both sides of the sock, holding on to the outside with your other fingers. Say, "I am holding the sock this way so that it will go on my foot easily."
4. Slowly, place the end of the open sock over your toes and pull the sock over your foot. Say, "I am pulling the sock onto my foot."
5. In the same manner, place the other sock on your foot.
6. Invite the child to try putting on their socks. You may need to remind them to continue to hold on to their sock or to pull the sock all the way on to the foot.
7. After they have placed their socks on their feet, show them how to remove their socks in the same slow and deliberate manner, while narrating what you do.

Variations:

1. Using a wooden dowel, empty paper towel tube, or similar item, model how to stretch rubber bands over the dowel. Invite your learner to try. This action mimics the action of stretching the sock over the foot. You can mount the wooden dowel on to a board or hold it firmly for your student.

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Practical Life

Changing From Shoes to Slippers

18-36 months

Supplies Needed:

- A pair of child's outdoor shoes
- A pair of child's slippers (for indoor use)
- A cubby, low shoe rack, or other designated place for shoes

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.
2. Make sure your learner is wearing outdoor shoes.

What to do:

1. Sit beside your student on the side that matches your dominant hand—left if you're left-handed, right if you're right-handed.
2. Say, "Shoes are for outside. Slippers are for inside. When we come inside, we change from our outside shoes to slippers. Today, we are going to learn how to change our shoes for slippers."
3. Point to the child's shoes. Say, "These are our outdoor shoes. We take them off when we come inside to keep our environment clean."
4. Show your student how to unfasten the shoe.
5. Next, show them how to remove the shoe. Place the child's opposite hand on the back of the shoe and pull down.
6. Place the shoe in the designated place.
7. Repeat with the other shoe.
8. Point to the slippers. Say, "These are our indoor shoes. We wear them to protect our feet and keep them warm."
9. Pick up one slipper and show your toddler how to hold it open. Guide your student to slide their foot into the slipper.
10. Repeat with the other slipper.

Variation:

1. Change the type of shoes your student is using. For example, use boots during the winter and allow your student to practice switching from boots to indoor slippers. You can also switch between outside shoes that tie with laces or fasten with Velcro.

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Practical Life

Packing and Unpacking a Lunchbox

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Lunchbox
- Finger food options for lunch (berries, crackers, vegetable sticks, cheese sticks etc.)
- Containers with lids or sandwich bags
- A napkin (optional)

Learners this age may also enjoy simple food prep tasks like picking grapes off a stem, washing and drying them.

Before you begin:

1. Prepare a workstation with the lunchbox and finger foods neatly arranged beside it.

What to do:

1. Say, "Today, we are going to pack your lunchbox! The first thing we have to do is open it so we can put food inside." Model how to open the lunchbox.
2. Start packing the items that don't involve a choice (sandwich/main course, water bottle, napkin) Name each item as you place it into the lunchbox. For example, you might say, "I am packing the napkin."
3. Next, pack the items that involve making choices. Say, "Now we need to choose which fruit to put in your lunchbox. We have strawberries or raspberries. Which would you like to have for lunch today?"
4. Wait until your student points to or verbally chooses their preferred fruit.
5. Then, have your learner help you put the fruit into a container or bag, and then into the lunchbox. Say, "You chose strawberries, we are going to put the strawberries in the lunchbox."
6. Repeat with the remaining finger foods.
7. Finally, say, "Now that your lunch is packed, we need to close the lunchbox." Model how to close the lunchbox.

Variation:

1. After school, or after the student is finished with their lunch, have them unpack their lunchbox. Start by saying, "Let's open your lunchbox and empty it." Take containers and bags out of the lunchbox and empty any remaining food into a compost bin or trash. Next, say, "Now that your containers/bags are empty, they need to be washed. We will put them in the sink." Place containers in the sink to be washed. Guide your student to put their lunchbox away in its designated spot. Model how to do this at first.

Care of Person



Practical Life

Personal Hygiene: Covering Mouth When Coughing and Sneezing

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Variation: The book 'Germs are not for sharing' - alternatively, you may ask your local librarian for other books about germs and illness for toddlers (optional)

To be effective, teaching a new habit like covering your face when sneezing and coughing must be addressed each time your learner sneezes or coughs. The new habit will be achieved through consistent direction and reinforcement.

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.

What to do:

1. Prepare yourself. Train your mind to redirect to your learner whenever they sneeze or cough. When you are confident that you can be consistent, begin this activity.
2. Whenever a toddler sneezes or coughs, walk up to them to address them in the moment.
3. Tell your student, "When we sneeze or cough, we cover our mouth with our arm."
4. Next, model the action for them as follows: while your learner is watching, imitate a sneeze or cough while covering your mouth and nose with your inner arm.
5. Say, "I covered my nose and mouth, so I won't get anyone else messy or sick."
6. Invite your toddler to try to cover their mouth with their inner arm as they pretend to sneeze or cough.
7. Consistently repeat this whenever a toddler sneezes or coughs. Stay calm - repetition will be necessary.

Variation:

1. Read the book 'Germs are not for sharing' or bring your learner to the library and ask the librarian for similar books to read. When talking about germs with toddlers, use simple language such as, "Germs live in our body when we are sick. We sneeze or cough germs out of our nose and mouth. These germs can get into someone else's body and make them sick. That's why it's important to cover your face when you sneeze or cough!"

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Practical Life

Personal Hygiene: Wiping or Blowing Your Nose with a Tissue

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Tissues
- Variation: empty tissue box & colorful silk scarves (optional)

Before you begin:

1. Place tissue boxes on accessible surfaces throughout the child's environment, so your student can pull tissues out without removing the box from where you've placed it.

What to do:

1. When you notice your learner's nose is running, calmly say, "Your nose is running. Let's get a tissue."
2. Walk them over to a tissue box. Using two fingers, slowly and deliberately demonstrate how to pull a tissue out of the box.
3. Invite the toddler to take a tissue. If the tissue gets stuck, show them how to hold the box down with their opposite hand while pulling up with the other.
4. Say, "I am going to blow my nose."
5. Pick up the tissue with both hands and place it over your nose. Blow your nose audibly.
6. Invite them to blow their nose.
7. If they have a hard time covering their whole nose, ask, "Do you want me to show you how to hold the tissue?"
8. Wait for their reply and offer assistance if asked.

Variation:

1. Once a child learns to remove tissues from the tissue box, they will enjoy removing all of them! As an alternative you may fill an empty tissue box with colorful silk scarves. Tell your child, "This tissue box has scarves in it. I'm going to take one out." Show your child how you remove the scarves from the box using your thumb and forefinger. Invite them to remove the scarves from the tissue box. When they remove all the scarves invite them to refill it and begin again.

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Practical Life

Personal Hygiene: Washing Hands

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Hand Washing Sequence Cards (attached)

IMPORTANT:
Always print with
the setting
"Fit to Printable
Area"

SAFETY: MONITOR TODDLERS WHEN USING THE FAUCET TO ENSURE THEY DON'T BURN THEMSELVES.

Before you begin:

1. Print, laminate, trim and hang the attached Hand Washing Sequence Cards near the sink (at the child's eye-level).
2. Place a foot stool next to the sink so your learner can easily reach the faucet independently.

What to do:

1. Invite your student to step up to the sink.
2. Say, "We are going to wash our hands."
3. Model how to turn on the faucet. Say, "This one is hot." and "This one is cold." You may also say, "Pushing the handle this way is hot." and "This way is cold."
4. Model the steps of hand washing, dictating the process as you go, using this or similar verbiage:
 - Wet your hands.
 - Rub the soap onto your hands.
 - Put the soap down.
 - Rub both hands together.
 - Rinse your hands under the water while rubbing.
 - Dry your hands on a towel.
5. Invite your learner to try. Dictate each step to them as you point to the applicable Hand Washing Sequence Card as they wash their own hands.

Variation:

1. Use the printed cards to create a lesson for your child. Place the cards out of order on a table. Take the first card and say, "First, we turn on the water." Place the card to the left, continue reciting the steps while putting them in order from left to right. When finished, place them out of order again and invite your child to try.

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Turn on Sink

1



Wet Hands

2



Put Soap on Hands

3



Scrub Hands

4



Rinse Soap off Hands

5



Dry Hands

6

Practical Life

Eating Independently: Feeding Self With Fingers

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A booster seat or other seating your child can get in and out of independently
- Prepared food that is simple to pick up with fingers
- A bowl
- Variation: veggie sticks (or other food that is easy to dip) and dip (optional)

SAFETY: ALWAYS STAY NEAR YOUR CHILD WHEN THEY ARE EATING INDEPENDENTLY.

Before you begin:

1. Prepare a plate of finger food (consider Cheerios, berries or other foods that are easy to pick up).
2. Instead of using a bib, let them eat in their regular clothes.

What to do:

1. Walk your learner to the table and invite them to climb up to their seat independently. Assist only if needed.
2. Say, "It's time for lunch (or snack or dinner). Today, we are going to practice eating by ourselves."
3. Give the student the bowl of food.
4. Tell the child, "We don't need a spoon or fork to eat this food. We can pick it up with our fingers and eat it."
5. If they begin to spill their food, tell them, "Some food went on the table, we will clean it when we are finished."
6. If they spill their food intentionally, correct them using positive language. Instead of saying, "Don't throw your food," say, "Food is for eating."
7. If they spill on their clothes, say, "There is food on your clothes, let's change them."

NOTE: Make sure you involve your toddler in clean-up!

Variation:

1. Many children enjoy using a dip when eating their food. Follow the steps to the left under "What to do," but add the following after step 4: Slowly and deliberately, show your student how to dip their food gently into the dip, being careful not to get your fingers in the dip. Then, bring the food to your mouth and eat it. Continue on with steps 5-7.

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Practical Life

Eating Independently: Using a Spoon

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Seating your child can get in and out of independently
- Prepared food that is simple to scoop such as yogurt or rice
- A standard sized stainless-steel spoon
- A bowl
- A child-sized spoon
- Variation: serving spoon and large bowl (optional)

SAFETY: ALWAYS STAY NEAR YOUR CHILD WHEN THEY ARE EATING INDEPENDENTLY.

Before you begin:

1. Prepare yogurt, rice or other easily spooned food.
2. Instead of using a bib, let them eat in their regular clothes.

What to do:

1. Walk your learner to the table and invite them to climb up to their seat independently. Assist only if needed.
2. Say, "It's time for lunch (or snack or dinner). Today, we are going to practice eating by ourselves."
3. Give them the bowl of food and a child-sized spoon.
4. Help position the spoon in their hand correctly.
5. If they miss their mouth when they try to eat, slowly demonstrate how to use the spoon.
6. If they begin to spill their food, tell them, "Some food went on the table, we will clean it when we are finished."
7. If they spill their food intentionally, correct them using positive language. Instead of saying, "Don't throw your food," say, "Food is for eating."
8. If they spill on their clothes, say, "There is food on your clothes, let's change them."

NOTE: Make sure you involve your toddler in clean-up!

Variation:

1. When eating a meal family style, allow your student to serve themselves from a larger serving bowl. Prepare a non-messy food to be served and place it in a large bowl with a serving spoon. Tell you learner that they are going to scoop food from the bowl onto their plate. Encourage them to use only the spoon to move the food from the bowl to their plate. This may be messy, but it's ok - let your toddler help clean up.

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Practical Life

Eating Independently: Using a Fork

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Seating your child can get in and out of independently
- Prepared food that is simple to pick up with a fork such as chicken nuggets, pasta or steamed vegetables
- A child-sized fork
- A bowl
- Variation: a child-sized butter knife (optional)

SAFETY: ALWAYS STAY NEAR YOUR CHILD WHEN THEY ARE EATING INDEPENDENTLY.

Before you begin:

1. Prepare and plate food that is easy to eat with a fork.
2. Instead of using a bib, let them eat in their regular clothes.

What to do:

1. Walk your learner to the table and invite them to climb up to their seat independently. Assist only if needed.
2. Say, "It's time for lunch (or snack or dinner). Today, we are going to practice eating by ourselves."
3. Give them the bowl of food and a fork.
4. Help position the fork in their hand correctly and tell them how to put the food on the fork, "To put food on a fork, we poke it with the fork."
5. If they miss their mouth when they try to eat, slowly demonstrate how to use the fork.
6. If they begin to spill their food, tell them, "Some food went on the table, we will clean it when we are finished."
7. If they spill their food intentionally, correct them using positive language. Instead of saying, "Don't throw your food," say, "Food is for eating."
8. If they spill on their clothes, say, "There is food on your clothes, let's change them."

NOTE: Make sure you involve your toddler in clean-up!

Variation:

1. Once your learner has become comfortable using a fork, show them how they can hold the fork in their non-dominant hand to hold their food steady and hold a knife in the dominant hand to cut their food. Start with soft foods that will be easy to cut, like cheese sticks. If it is too hard for your student to hold the fork in one hand while cutting with the other, let them hold the food with their hand instead of the fork.

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Practical Life

Eating Independently: Drinking From a Cup

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Seating your child can get in and out of independently
- A liquid for your student to drink such as water or milk
- A cup
- Variation: water dispenser with spigot (optional)
- Variation: towel (optional)

SAFETY: ALWAYS STAY NEAR YOUR CHILD WHEN THEY ARE EATING INDEPENDENTLY.

Before you begin:

1. Prepare a drink for your learner. If stains are a concern, use water.
2. Instead of using a bib, let them eat in their regular clothes.

What to do:

1. Walk your learner to the table and invite them to climb up to their seat independently. Assist only if needed.
2. Say, "It's time to have a drink. Today, we are going to practice drinking by ourselves."
3. Give them the cup with the drink in it.
4. Help position the cup in their hands correctly: one hand on each side of the cup.
5. If they are missing their mouth, slowly demonstrate how to bring the cup to your lips. Then, slowly tip the cup and drink.
6. If needed, assist them by putting your hands over the top of their hands. Ensure that they don't get too much water in their mouth at one time.
7. If they begin to spill their drink, tell them, "Some water went on the table, we will clean it when we are finished."
8. If they spill their water intentionally, correct them using positive language. Instead of saying, "Don't dump out your water," say, "Water is for drinking."
9. If your toddler has spilled on their clothes say, "There is water on your clothes, let's change them."

NOTE: Make sure you involve your toddler in clean-up!

Variation:

1. Set up a water station on a low surface for your student. Include a couple of small cups and a water dispenser with a spigot that is easy for little hands to manipulate. Include a place to put the used cup, like a trash can, and a towel to place under the water dispenser for drips and spills. Demonstrate how to dispense the water, how much water to put in the cup, and where to put the cup when finished. Narrate what you are doing as you do it.

Care of Person



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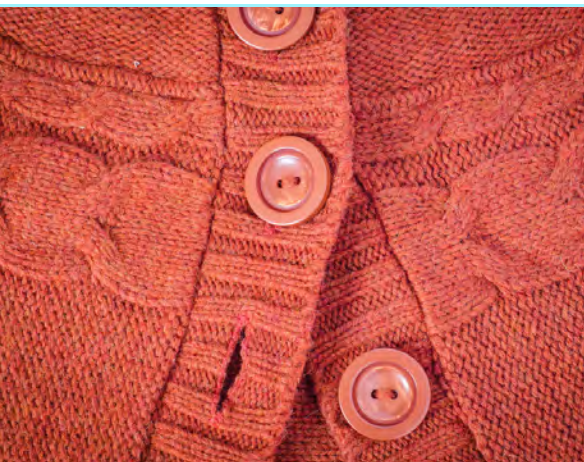
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Practical Life

Alternative to Toddler Dressing Frames - Large Button

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Large teddy bear
- Child's sweater with large buttons
- Variation 1: toddler dressing frame: large button (optional)
- Variation 2: empty coffee canister, large buttons (optional)

SAFETY: CHECK THAT BUTTONS ARE SECURE. NEVER LEAVE YOUR CHILD ALONE WITH LOOSE BUTTONS.

Before you begin:

1. Put the child's sweater on the teddy bear
2. Button all of the buttons.
3. Invite your learner to join you on the floor.

Variations:

1. Follow the same directions as given in "What to do" using the Montessori large button dressing frame.
2. Using an empty coffee canister and large buttons, you can make a small work for your child. Before you begin, use a razor to cut a button-sized slit in the plastic lid. Place buttons in a bowl next to the canister. Let the toddler push the large plastic buttons through the slot. Afterward, show them how to open the lid to remove the buttons.

What to do:

1. Say, "Today, we are going to practice buttoning!"
2. Beginning with the top button, use a left-handed pincer grip to hold the left side of the sweater.
3. Slowly, use the right-handed pincer grip to unbutton the top button. (Simply pull slightly to the right and turn the button inward to release the button from the buttonhole.)
4. Say, "I unbuttoned the button. Now I will button it."
5. Using the same hands in the same positions, pull the fabric to the left to open the buttonhole. Using the right hand, tilt the button inward to move it through the hole.
6. Invite your toddler to try. (Note: Your learner may need you to hold the buttonhole open while they put the button through.)
7. In addition to buttoning and unbuttoning, your child will enjoy dressing up their teddy in different sweaters.

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Practical Life

Alternative to Toddler Dressing Frames - Large Velcro

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Shoes with Velcro straps
- Variation: toddler dressing frame - large Velcro (optional)

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary supplies.
2. Invite your learner to join you on the floor.

What to do:

1. Say, "We are going to practice opening and closing Velcro on your shoes."
2. Slowly and deliberately, model how to open the Velcro. Hold the shoe in your left hand and, using a pincer grip, pull the Velcro across the shoe with your right hand. Say, "I opened the Velcro."
3. Using your pincer grip, hold the Velcro and pull it across to place it on top of the shoe. Exaggerate the motion of pulling the Velcro tight across the shoe.
4. Say, "I closed the Velcro. Would you like to try?"
5. When the toddler takes their turn, they may not pull the strap across to tighten the shoe at first. You can bring this to their attention by asking, "Do your shoes feel loose?" If they reply "no," bring this to their attention another day. As they practice more and more, they will become more comfortable with each step in the process.

Variation:

1. Using the large Velcro Montessori dressing frame, follow the same process described in "What to do." Bring the dressing frame to the table and begin with the top panel on the left. Using your pincer grip of your left hand, hold the edge of the top panel. Slowly, pull the top piece off the bottom piece. Continue in this manner until all three sections are open. Work from top to bottom and close the sections. Invite your learner to try to use the dressing frame.

Care of Person 



Practical Life

Alternative to Toddler Dressing Frames - Large Zipper

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Child's jacket or sweatshirt with a zipper
- Variation 1: toddler dressing frame: large zipper (optional)

SAFETY: SUPERVISE CLOSELY WHEN WORKING WITH ZIPPERS TO ENSURE THEIR FINGERS DON'T GET PINCHED.

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary supplies.
2. Invite the child to join you on the floor.

What to do:

1. Say, "We are going to practice zipping up our coat/sweatshirt today."
2. Slowly and deliberately, model how to connect the zipper. Say, "I am making sure the two sides of the zipper connect."
3. Next, slowly pull the zipper up. It is best to hold the left side with your left hand and to use a pincer grip. Use your right hand to pull the zipper up. Say, "I zipped up your coat".
4. Hold the top left side of the coat in your left hand and use your right hand to slowly unzip the coat.
5. When the jacket is unzipped, invite your child to try.
6. Most children need the zipper to be started for them until they are 3-4 years old, but they will be very capable and excited to zip up the coat themselves.
7. When assisting, ensure that your learner is using their dominant hand for zipping and less dominant hand for pulling the fabric down.

Variation:

1. Using the same directions included in "What to do," introduce the large zipper Montessori dressing frame.

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Practical Life

Alternative to Toddler Dressing Frames - Buckling

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A soft, child-safe belt (not too stiff, larger buckles)
- A medium-sized stuffed animal that can sit upright
- Variation 1: toddler dressing frame: buckles (optional)

SAFETY: WATCH TODDLER CAREFULLY AND NEVER LEAVE THEM ALONE WHEN WORKING WITH BELTS.

Before you begin:

1. Gather the necessary materials.
2. Invite the child to join you on the floor.

What to do:

1. Say, "We are going to put a belt on Teddy!"
2. Slowly and deliberately, model how to hold the belt and guide the end through the buckle. Say, "First, we take the end of the belt and put it through the hole."
3. Demonstrate how to pull the belt through the buckle. Say, "Now, we pull it through to make it tight."
4. Model how to insert the prong into one of the belt holes. Say "We find a hole and push this little pointy part in to keep the belt closed. Now I've put the belt on Teddy!"
5. Slowly and deliberately, demonstrate how to neatly take the belt off. First, remove the prong from the hole. Then removing the belt from the buckle. Say, "I took the belt off Teddy!"
6. Invite your student to try, saying, "You try, push the belt through the buckle."
7. Offer guidance as needed until they can do it on their own.

Variation:

1. Using the same directions included in "What to do," introduce the buckles Montessori dressing frame.

Care of Person 



Practical Life

Alternative to Toddler Dressing Frames - Snapping

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Child's jacket or sweatshirt with snaps
- Variation 1: toddler dressing frame - snaps (optional)

Before you begin:

1. Gather necessary materials.
2. Invite your learner to join you on the floor.

What to do:

1. Say "We are going to practice snapping our coat/sweatshirt today."
2. Slowly show your child how to align the side of each snap with the other side.
3. Hold the snap between your pincer grip and then squeeze the snap together until you hear a snap, saying to your student, "I am going to squeeze these two sides together until I hear a snap."
4. Repeat with the remaining steps, saying to your student, "I snapped up your coat."
5. Slowly unsnap the coat by pulling the left side of the jacket carefully away from the right.
6. When the jacket is unsnapped, invite your child to try.
7. When helping your child do it themselves, ensure they are using their dominant hand for squeezing the two sides of the snaps together.

Variation:

1. Using the same directions as in "What to do" you can introduce the snap Montessori dressing frame.

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Dress-Up Variations



A toddler-friendly dress-up basket or chest encourages independence and creativity through play. Fill it with simple clothing like hats, scarves, shirts and pants with elastic waists.

Toddlers can also practice dressing skills with a baby doll. Set this up separately from the dress-up basket. Provide real newborn clothes with zippers, snaps, and buttons. These activities build fine motor skills, and confidence while reinforcing practical life skills in a fun and meaningful way.





Practical Life

PART 7

Diapering & Independent Toileting



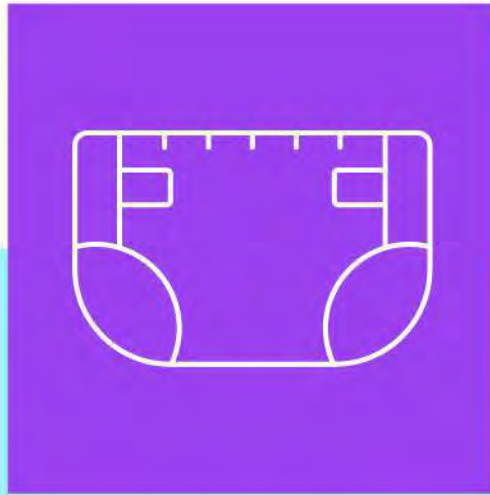
Diapering & Independent Toileting Contents

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IMPORTANT:
Always print with
the setting
"Fit to Printable
Area"



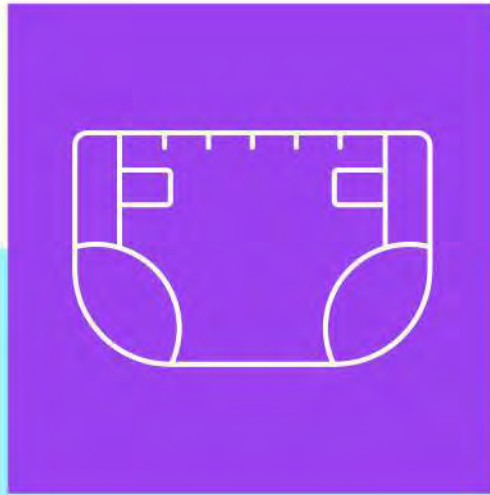
Diapering: Introduction



In a Montessori environment, diapering is approached as a respectful and collaborative process. The child is viewed as an active participant, not a passive recipient. Diaper changes are typically done standing up, which supports the development of balance and coordination while allowing the child to practice essential self-care skills.

During each diaper change, children are gently encouraged to take part in the routine. This includes undressing, discarding the used diaper, wiping, fastening a clean diaper, getting dressed, and washing their hands. By involving children in this way, we not only support their growing independence and confidence, but we also lay a natural foundation for future potty learning. When the time comes, many of the steps will already be familiar, helping the transition feel smooth and empowering.

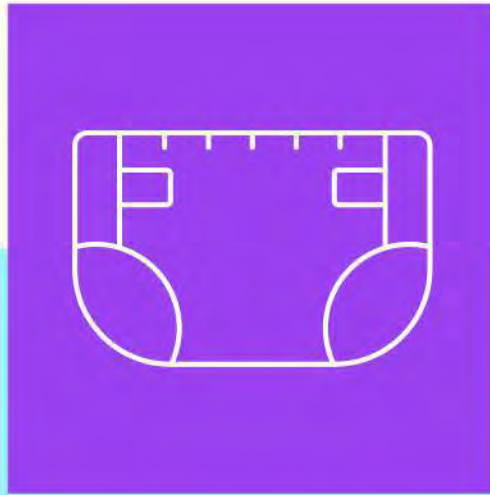
Diapering: Location



Toilet learning begins well before a child uses the potty—it starts with building body awareness and understanding bodily functions. In the Montessori approach, this early stage lays the foundation for future independence by treating diapering as a respectful, consistent, and intentional process.

Whenever possible, diaper changes should take place in the bathroom. This creates a clear and consistent association between toileting and the bathroom environment. Even if the child isn't yet using the toilet, the simple routine of going to the bathroom for each diaper change helps reinforce the idea that this is the appropriate place for elimination. Over time, this consistent environmental cue builds a strong internal connection and supports a smoother transition to using the toilet.

Diapering: Language



During every diaper change, use clear, consistent language and maintain a calm, respectful tone. Narrate the process in a matter-of-fact way to help your learner understand what is happening:

- “Your diaper is wet. That means you went pee-pee.”
- “I’m wiping your bottom to help you stay clean and comfortable.”
- “Soon, your body will tell you when it’s time to go to the potty.”

These simple phrases help your child connect physical sensations with language, recognize patterns, and develop early body awareness.

Over time, this consistent communication lays a strong foundation for both verbal expression and toilet learning.

Practical Life

Diapering Instructions

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Mirror
- Small stool or chair
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Paper for the floor for diaper changes with poop
- Diapering Sequence Cards (page 114)

SAFETY: DIAPERING IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT NOT TOUCHING POOP OR PEE.

Before you begin:

1. Store diapering supplies within easy reach.
2. Give your toddler a stable place to balance. (The edge of the bathtub works well.)
3. Print, trim, laminate and hang the Diapering Sequence Cards at the child's eye-level.
4. Talk through the sequence cards before diapering.

What to do:

1. Take your learner to the bathroom.
2. Invite them to get a diaper.
3. Ask your toddler to stand facing the mirror while you sit behind them on a stool or chair.
4. Point to step 1 of the sequence cards and say "Your diaper is dirty. It's time to change it. May I pull down your pants?"
5. Pull down their pants or ask them to push down their pants.
6. Point to step 2 of the sequence cards, then unfasten the diaper and wipe thoroughly.
7. Point to step 3 of the sequence cards, then remove the diaper, wrap it up and invite them to throw it away.
8. Still facing the mirror, point to step 4 of the sequence cards, then place a new diaper on their bottom. Hold it in place with your knee while fastening the Velcro.
9. Point to step 5 of the sequence cards, then invite your student to pull up their pants.
10. Point to step 6 of the sequence cards and say, "We always wash our hands after using the bathroom."
11. Assist your learner in thoroughly washing and drying their hands.

Multisori recommends reserving standing diaper changes for pee only, to ensure that poop is able to be cleaned completely.

Your toddler may not be able to verbalize consent yet, but asking for it lays the groundwork for understanding consent rules later in life and shows you respect their autonomy.

When you teach your child to wash their hands, remember to also teach them the importance of drying them. Dry hands carry fewer germs!

Diapering & Toileting



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Practical Life

Diapering

18-36 months

Diapering Sequence Cards

IMPORTANT:
Always print with
the setting
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Area"

Instructions: Print, laminate and trim the six sequence cards on the following page. Place them on the wall, in order from left to right, in the bathroom where diaper changes occur. (Arranging the cards in order from left-to-right now lays the foundation for reading left-to-right later in life.) Point to each card, in order, as you assist the child with standing diaper changes. Encourage your learner's burgeoning independence during this process, while sharing important notes about hygiene. For boys and girls, touch on the importance of not touching their poop or pee. For girls, discuss the proper mechanics of wiping: from front to back. This will help reduce the likelihood of vaginal irritation and infection. Narrate the entire process for the child, as described in the "What to Do" section of the prior page. This is a simple way to help prepare small children for toilet learning.





Undress

1



Remove Diaper & Wipe

2



Throw Away

3



Fasten Diaper

4



Dress

5



Wash & Dry Hands

6

Practical Life

Preparing for Toilet Learning

18-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- “Everyone Goes Potty” mini-book (attached)

IMPORTANT:
Always print with
the setting
“Fit to Printable
Area”

SAFETY: ALWAYS SUPERVISE YOUR LEARNER WHILE PREPARING FOR TOILET LEARNING.

Everyone Goes Potty

Before you begin:

1. Print, laminate trim and bind the “Everyone Goes Potty” mini-book.

What to do:

1. Invite your learner to join you and say “We have a new book to read!”
2. Slowly and playfully, read the book to your student. Get the child comfortable using the words routinely used during toilet: pee, poo, potty, and so on.
3. Ask the toddler if they would like to try sitting on the potty or flushing the potty. If they do, walk them through the process, even if they don’t actually have to go potty in that moment. You would say either “Ok, you need to go pee, so sit on the potty. Are you all done? Time to wipe and flush the potty! Now, let’s wash and dry our hands.” OR “Ok, when you need to go pee, sit on the potty. When you’re done, it’s time to wipe and flush the potty! After that, we wash and dry our hands!”
4. Repeat as desired.

NOTE: If the child seems scared or uncomfortable, ask them if they want to continue reading the book. If not, put it away and try again later.

Variation:

Talk about the potty during diaper changes. Say things like:

- “Your diaper is wet. That means your body let out some pee.”
- “You had a poop. That’s something all bodies do!”
- “Your body is growing, and one day soon you’ll use the potty instead of a diaper.”
- “You’re learning more about your body every day.”
- “Soon, we’ll try sitting on the potty after diaper changes.”

Diapering & Toileting



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Everyone Goes Potty



This is a potty.



This is a potty, too.



2



This is also a potty.



3

4



Potties may look different.



5



But, their purpose is the same.



6



People pee-pee in potties.



7



People poo-poo in potties, too.





8

Have you ever sat on a potty?



9

You should try it!



10

Potties flush!



11

Flushing removes the pee and poo.



12



Have you ever flushed a potty?



13



You should try it!



14



It might make a little noise.



15



That's normal. It will be over soon.





After you flush, wash your hands.



Remember to use soap!



Then, dry your hands.



You can use a towel or paper towel.



20



Potties help keep you clean.



21



All people use potties.



22



People feel when they need to pee.



23



People feel when they need to poo.





Tell mom or dad when you feel it!



Then, they'll teach you more about potties!





MONTESSORI TOILETING QUICK START GUIDE

Building Independence Through Respect & Consistency

Philosophy & Mindset

- Toileting is a natural process, not a performance
- Keep your focus on progress, not perfection
- Avoid pressure, praise, persuasion or shame
- Approach with patience, consistency, and calm positivity
- Utilize routine, repetition, and a prepared environment

Toilet Learning Stages

1. Awareness – Child begins to notice wet/dry sensations
2. Interest – Child watches others and shows curiosity
3. Participation – Child cooperates with toileting routines
4. Independence – Child initiates toileting and manages most steps with minimal help.

Environment Prep

- Use a child-sized potty or a toilet seat insert
- Store clean clothes and wipes nearby
- Include a hamper and invite the child to help with cleanup
- Dress the child in clothing that's easy to remove
- Add comforting elements like a soft rug or favorite book





Daily Routine Suggestions

Offer the toilet consistently during natural transition times like upon waking, before and after meals, before leaving the house, and before nap and bedtime.

Modeling & Language

- Let toddlers observe trusted adults when appropriate
- Use clear, consistent, and respectful language like:
 - “It’s time to use the potty”
 - “You had an accident, so let’s get cleaned up”
 - “You’re learning - accidents are okay”
- Avoid excessive praise—support with trust and presence

Expect Accidents

- Accidents are normal and necessary for learning
 - Stay neutral and reassuring, using language like, “Your pants are wet - let’s change into dry ones”
- Never punish, shame, or scold
- Focus on learning, not performance

Handling Fear or Resistance

- If a child refuses or shows anxiety, pause and slow down
- Let them spend time in the bathroom without pressure
- Say things like, “The potty is here when you’re ready”
- Stay calm—your confidence helps them feel safe
- Keep the environment predictable and welcoming



Diapers & Sleep

- Use diapers during naps and overnight in the early stages
- Focus on daytime toileting first, as nighttime readiness develops later (typically, after 3 years old)
- Stay consistent with routines and language

What Success Really Looks Like

- Child begins to notice and anticipate the need to go
- They participate in toileting as part of their daily rhythm
- They manage simple steps like undressing, sitting, flushing, handwashing and drying their hands
- Dry periods become longer and accidents decrease
- Stress about toileting decreases. They feel calm & capable
- Most importantly, they develop body awareness and pride —without shame, pressure, persuasion or rewards

Safety Notes

- Children must always be supervised in the bathroom
- Never leave a toddler unattended, especially near water
- If using a toilet insert, also provide a stepstool
- If using a regular-sized toilet, hold the child in your arms



Toileting: Introduction



The Montessori approach to toilet learning emphasizes respect for the child's natural development and readiness cues, rather than enforcing a strict timeline based on age. It recognizes that each child's journey to independence is unique, and supports this process by observing behaviors that indicate they are ready to begin.

In Montessori, toilet learning is more than just mastering the physical act. It is about fostering a child's growing awareness of their body and building confidence in self-care skills through consistent, gentle routines that encourage independence.

Toileting: Readiness



Montessori toilet learning begins by observing the child for signs of readiness rather than enforcing a set timeline. Signs of readiness include:

- Staying dry for longer periods, especially during naps or for a few hours at a time
- Showing curiosity about the toilet or bathroom, including watching others or pretending with toys
- Communicating elimination needs using words, signs, or gestures
- Asking for privacy or showing a preference for where eliminate
- Physical independence, like walking, sitting down, and pulling pants up



Toileting: Readiness



Readiness is not a checklist with a single moment of “go.” Instead, it’s a continuum—children may show some signs while still developing others.

A child doesn’t need to display all signs before beginning toilet learning. The process can be introduced gently and progressively, starting with exposure, vocabulary, and opportunities for choice and independence.

By observing the child closely and following their lead, we honor their developmental timing and help them feel confident and successful in this important step toward independence.

Toileting: Inviting Participation



As a child begins to show signs of readiness—such as staying dry for longer stretches, hiding to poop, showing interest in the bathroom, or talking about pee and poop—it’s time to gently invite them into more active participation in the toileting process. This initial stage is not about “training,” but about normalizing the experience of using the toilet and supporting the child’s emerging independence.

In the Montessori approach, we view toileting as a natural part of self-care, much like dressing or handwashing. The goal is to integrate it into the child’s daily routine with calm consistency and without pressure.

Toileting: Language



In Montessori toilet learning, language matters. We use clear, neutral, and respectful language. We never pressure or shame.

Instead of asking, “Do you need to go?” (which often leads to “no,” even when they do) say, “It’s time to sit on the potty,” or “It’s time to see if your body is ready to potty.”

This gentle direction supports the child’s sense of order and helps them internalize toileting as a natural part of their daily routine. Toddlers may not yet recognize the sensation of needing to go, so regular opportunities are key.

Toileting: Using a Rhythm



Offer consistent invitations to use the potty at natural transition points, such as:

- Upon waking
- Before and after meals
- Before going outside
- Before naps or bedtime
- Before car rides or stroller trips

These moments act as predictable cues in the child's day, helping them connect toileting with familiar routines. Over time, the body and brain begin to sync with these rhythms, fostering greater awareness and independence without pressure or force.



Toileting: Building Independence



Whenever possible, invite the child to participate in the toileting process with small, manageable tasks:

- Pulling down pants
- Sitting on the potty
- Wiping (even just attempting)
- Flushing the toilet
- Washing and drying hands

Each of these steps helps build the child’s confidence and reinforces the idea that they are capable of caring for their own body. In the Montessori perspective, these moments of self-care are not just practical—they’re deeply meaningful. They support the child’s sense of competence and personal agency.

Toileting: Tips for Success



- Provide access to a child-sized potty or toilet seat insert and let the child explore it freely. No pressure—just familiarity.
- Involve the child in care routines, like pulling pants up or down, wiping, or flushing. These small actions build independence.
- Offer regular toilet opportunities (e.g., after sleep, meals, or before outings) within a gentle, predictable rhythm.
- Use clear, respectful language like, “Let’s see if your body is ready,” and avoid bribes, pressure, or exaggerated praise.
- Choose comfortable clothing that promotes independence, such as elastic-waist pants or underwear that’s easy to manage.
- Normalize toileting through modeling and books. Let the child observe trusted adults or hear stories that support understanding.

Practical Life

Toilet Learning Instructions

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- A child-sized potty or step-stool and toilet insert for reaching & using the toilet
- Easy to remove clothing (elastic waistband pants)
- Toilet paper or wipes

- Sink
- Soap
- Towel
- Child-accessible laundry basket for soiled clothes
- Spare clean clothes within student's reach
- Toileting Sequence Cards

SAFETY: ALWAYS HOLD YOUR LEARNER IF USING A REGULAR-SIZED TOILET WITHOUT AN INSERT.

Before you begin:

1. Ensure that the bathroom is clean, organized, and child-friendly, with all materials accessible to your student.
2. Print, trim, laminate and hang the Toileting Sequence Cards at the child's eye-level.
3. Talk through the sequence cards before diapering.

What to do:

1. At the time you've chosen for consistent potty use, say, "It's time to sit on the potty!"
2. Take your learner to the bathroom.
3. Point to Step 1 on the sequence cards and say, "It's time to pull down your pants and underwear." Allow your student to attempt to do this on their own. Assist only as needed.
4. Point to Step 2 on the sequence cards and say, "Now it's time to sit on the potty." Help the toddler sit comfortably on the toilet, assisting as necessary to prevent falls.
5. Point to Step 3 on the sequence cards and say, "Now, you can relax and let the pee-pee and poo-poo come out of your body."
6. Point to Step 4 on the sequence cards and say, "Now, it's time to wipe and flush." Show the child how to use the toilet paper or wipes to clean themselves. Say, "Use this wipe to clean yourself." Assist as needed. When your student is clean, invite them to flush the toilet. Do this whether or not they actually went potty.
7. Point to Step 5 on the sequence cards and say, "Let's pull up our pants and underwear." Allow your student to attempt to do this on their own. Assist only as needed.
8. Point to Step 6 on the sequence cards and say "Now, let's wash our hands with soap and water." Ensure they wash their hands thoroughly following proper hand washing steps. Say, "Here's a towel to dry your hands" as you give them a towel.

TAKE THE TIME TO THOROUGHLY PREPARE!

Earlier is not always better.

Begin this process when:

- The child is prepared
- The environment is prepared
- You are prepared

Help your learner recognize their need to use the restroom by observing carefully. When they appear to need to go, say "It looks like you need to use the bathroom; it's time to try using the potty. You should go potty whenever you have that feeling in your body."

Diapering & Toileting



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Practical Life

Toilet Learning

24-36 months

Toileting Sequence Cards

Instructions: Print, laminate and trim the six sequence cards on the following page. Place them on the wall, in order from left-to-right, in the bathroom. (Arranging the cards in order from left-to-right now lays the foundation for reading left-to-right later in life.) Point to each card, in order, as you take the child to go potty. Encourage your learner’s burgeoning independence during this process, while sharing important notes about hygiene. For boys and girls, touch on the importance of not touching their poop or pee. For girls, discuss the proper mechanics of wiping; from front-to-back. This will help reduce the likelihood of vaginal irritation and infection. Narrate the entire process for the child, as described in the “What to Do” section of the prior page.





Take off Pants & Underwear

1



Sit on the Potty

2



Go Pee-Pee & Poo-Poo

3



Wipe Yourself & Flush

4



Pull up Underwear & Pants

5



Wash & Dry Hands

6

Toileting: Underwear



A key milestone in toilet learning is moving from diapers to training pants or cotton underwear. Unlike disposables, which keep children feeling dry, cloth options allow them to feel wetness—providing natural, immediate feedback that supports body awareness and independence. Begin this step only after repeatedly and consistently practicing all the earlier parts of this curriculum.

Start this transition when you can be consistent, such as a long weekend or stretch at home. Schools, daycares, and co-ops should take cues from the child’s primary caregivers.

All grown-ups should let the toddler know they’re ready for “big kid” underwear. Parents should invite them to help choose or lay out the underwear.

At the start, use underwear only during waking hours. Use diapers or cloth trainers for naps and nighttime until your child regularly wakes dry and shows readiness to go without them.

Toileting: Accidents



Accidents aren't setbacks—they're a normal and necessary part of the learning process. Expect them daily at first. Respond with calm, neutral support. Avoid language that shames or scolds. Instead, offer simple observations.

A great response sounds like this: "Your pants are wet. That means your body let some pee out. Let's get some dry clothes. Next time, we'll try to get to the potty a little sooner."

Invite your learner to take part in the cleanup process in a respectful, non-punitive way:

- Let them choose clean clothes from a designated basket or drawer
- Encourage them to place soiled clothes in the laundry basket
- Guide them to the bathroom to try again and wash their hands

These steps reinforce a sense of ownership without blame, helping toddlers feel capable—even when things don't go perfectly.

Practical Life

Cleaning Up After an Accident

24-36 months



Supplies Needed:

- Small hamper
- Basket with clean clothes
- Plastic bin or waterproof bag for soiled clothes
- Potty chair or toilet seat insert
- Child-sized towel or wipes

For Floor Clean-up AFTER ADULT has Sanitized the Area:

- Small bucket
- Cloth

SAFETY: DO NOT ALLOW TODDLERS NEAR CHEMICALS USED TO SANITIZE SURFACES.

Before you begin:

1. Ensure the bathroom is clean, organized, and child-friendly, with all materials except those with chemicals accessible to your student.

What to do:

1. Gently notice the accident with nonjudgmental language, saying, "Your pants are wet, let's go change them."
2. Invite your student to help, saying, "You can help change your clothes. Let's go to the bathroom together."
3. Walk your learner to the bathroom.
4. Help them remove wet clothing, offering as much independence as possible. Before helping, say, "Can you push your pants down?"
5. Show your toddler how to place wet items in a designated laundry bin or bag, saying, "Wet pants go in the laundry."
6. Offer a child-sized towel or wipes to dry themselves, saying, "Here's a towel to dry your legs." Assist only if needed.
7. Encourage your student to try sitting on the toilet.
8. Let the student choose new clothes saying, "Would you like the blue pants or the gray ones?" Support them in dressing as needed. Allow as much independence as possible.
9. If appropriate, invite your learner to help clean the floor, saying, "There's some pee on the floor. Here's a cloth. We can clean it together."
10. Guide your student to wash hands with soap and water afterward, saying, "After changing, we always wash and dry our hands."

Offer encouragement (not praise) and reinforce effort and autonomy, saying, "You took care of your body today. You're learning every day!"

Diapering & Toileting



Toileting: Deepening Independence



Once your learner regularly uses the toilet and recognizes their body’s signals, your role shifts again—this time, toward observation and gentle support only when needed. You should maintain a prepared environment:

- Keep the step stool and insert available
- Store spare, clean clothes within reach
- Don’t use daytime diapers or pull-ups unless medically necessary

This setup communicates: “You are still supported as you do more on your own.”

At this stage, many toddlers will:

- Use the toilet independently
- Manage dressing and undressing
- Independently clean up minor accidents
- Handle simple hygiene routines

Carefully observe and trust their readiness. When it’s time, step back & follow their lead.

Toileting: Night Time



Nighttime dryness is developmental and often follows daytime readiness. It depends on physical maturity, like the ability to hold urine and wake when the bladder is full. You can support this process by:

- Using diapers or training pants for sleep until your child consistently wakes dry
- Using the toilet before and after sleep
- Limiting fluids close to bedtime (without restricting hydration harshly)
- Utilizing a waterproof mattress cover
- Switching to cloth training pants or thick underwear only when your child is ready

Montessori philosophy encourages patience, observation, and trust. Bedwetting is never a behavior to correct in toddlers—it's a normal part of development. Always reassure your child: "Your body is still learning, and that's okay. You learn more every day!"

Toileting: Low-Pressure Reinforcement



Montessori emphasizes intrinsic motivation—the quiet pride of doing for oneself—over rewards like stickers or treats. Children don’t need bribes to learn; they need trust and acknowledgment.

You can support their progress with simple, observational language:

- “You listened to your body”
- “You noticed when you had to go”
- You’re taking care of yourself”
- “Nice job listening to your body”

Note that praise only becomes problematic when it’s excessive or tied to performance. It’s ok to celebrate big moments—just focus on effort and independence. Avoid phrases like:

- “Good job for not having an accident”
- “You made me proud”
- “You’re such a good girl/boy”

Instead, center your response on what they did and how it helps them grow. This builds confidence from the inside out.

Toileting: Long-Term Support



Toilet learning is a journey, not a one-time achievement. It often unfolds over months—sometimes longer—and includes setbacks and frustration along the way. This is normal. Your primary job is to maintain a predictable rhythm by integrating toileting into daily routines. Consistency creates security, reinforces habits, and helps the child internalize toileting as a natural part of life.

Secondarily, you should focus on keeping the experience calm and pressure-free. Avoid turning it into a battle, bribe, or performance.

Instead, treat toileting with the same quiet respect you offer other aspects of self-care.

Most importantly, trust the process. Every child moves at their own pace. Stay steady, offer gentle support, and celebrate slow, steady progress. It's still progress—and your patience is a powerful gift.

Toileting: Regressions



Toilet learning isn't always linear. Regressions are normal—especially during big changes like a move, a new sibling, or starting school. They can also happen when a child is tired, overstimulated, or emotionally off balance. Montessori encourages us to respond with patience and trust. Regressions aren't failures—they're just temporary setbacks. When regressions happen, try:

- Staying neutral: no shame or pressure
- Reinforcing routines: regular potty times
- Reconnecting: slow down, offer comfort, and spend one-on-one time
- Checking the environment: make sure everything is still accessible and inviting
- Observing: notice any patterns - do accidents or regressions occur at a certain time or in certain situations?

Above all, try not to worry. With consistency and compassion, your learner will find their rhythm again.

Toileting: Fear & Anxiety



It's not uncommon for children to experience fear or anxiety around using the toilet. The experience can feel unfamiliar, loud, or even overwhelming—especially if the child feels rushed, pressured, or uncertain. In Montessori, we honor the whole child, including their emotional world. Fear is not something to correct or eliminate; it's a signal to pause, slow down, and offer support.

Sometimes fear stems from a single upsetting moment—falling in, being startled by a flush, or feeling rushed. Acknowledge your child's feelings with empathy, offer reassurance, and focus on rebuilding trust. Most importantly, trust the child's timeline. There's no need to push. When a child feels emotionally safe, they naturally move forward with greater confidence and self-assurance.

Toileting: Fear & Anxiety



If your learner cries, hides, or refuses to sit on the potty, it's a sign to slow down—not push forward. Fearful resistance is normal and temporary with the right support. Try these gentle strategies:

- Step back - provide time to observe, read books, or simply be in the bathroom without pressure
- Stay neutral - skip disappointment, praise or persuasion. Say, “The potty is here when your body is ready” or “We can try again later”
- Model calm - your attitude matters, so keep your tone warm, steady, and matter-of-fact—even during accidents
- Make it inviting - use a child-sized potty or seat insert and add cozy touches like a book or favorite picture

Toileting: What Success Really Looks Like



In Montessori, success in toilet learning isn't measured by how early a child is "fully potty trained," but by the gradual development of independence, self-awareness, and confidence.

Success looks different for every child, but common signs of success include:

- Body Awareness - the child begins to notice when they're peeing or pooping—and anticipates it before it happens
- Routine Participation - they use the toilet as part of their daily rhythm—after waking, before meals, before going outside—sometimes needing reminders
- Growing Independence - they start managing steps like pulling down pants, sitting on the potty, wiping with support, flushing, and washing hands

Toileting: What Success Really Looks Like



- Dry Periods - they stay dry for longer stretches, experience fewer accidents, and feel proud to wear cotton underwear or training pants
- Emotional Ease - toileting becomes a calm, low-stress part of the day with the child feeling supported—even when accidents occur.
- Confidence and Pride - most important, they develop a strong sense of ownership over their body—without shame, pressure, or rewards

Success doesn't mean perfection. Accidents and regressions are part of the process. The real goal is lasting body awareness and autonomy, supported by trust, patience, and consistency.

Transitioning to Primary



There is often an incremental transition to the primary curriculum. Your child may still be working on mastering some skills but may be ready to be challenged in other ways. Some of the signs they are ready to transition to the primary curriculum include: more developed conversational skills, emerging development of the pincer grip (grip with thumb and pointer finger), ability to follow 3 or more step directions, more sustained focus on their work and a general mastery of the majority of the activities listed. If your child is still working on mastering some of these skills, you can feel free to begin the primary curriculum while continuing to practice elements of the toddler curriculum that they are still in the process of mastering.