Practical Life

I. Practical Life Requirements

# Practical Life Course Outline

1. Practical Life Requirements
   1. Practical Life Course Outline
   2. Album Requirements for the Practical Life Album
   3. Original Material Assignment (see Internship Requirements)
   4. Suggested Readings for Practical Life

ll. Philosophy of the Practical Life Curriculum

(this list may be helpful when you write your introduction)

1. Practical Life Curriculum Guide
2. Design Characteristics of the Practical Life Materials
3. Guidelines for Preparing the Practical Life Materials
4. Sequencing and Basic Elements of Practical Life
5. Direct Aims of the Practical Life curriculum
6. Guiding Principles
7. A Progression of Classroom Activities

lll. The Prepared Environment

1. Introductory Paragraph **(written by the student)**
2. Quotes by Dr. Maria Montessori
3. Seven Basic Components
   1. concept of freedom
   2. structure and order
   3. reality and nature
   4. beauty and atmosphere
   5. Montessori materials
   6. development of community life
   7. the adult
4. Daily Maintenance Check List
5. Paying Attention to Details

lV. Ground Rules

1. Introductory Paragraph **(written by the student)**
2. Introduction to Ground Rules
3. Suggested Ground rules for a Montessori Classroom
4. Grace and Courtesy
   1. Introductory Paragraph **(written by the student)**
   2. Suggested Grace and Courtesy Lessons
   3. Grace and Courtesy for Adults In a Montessori Classroom

Vl. Fundamental Movements

1. Introduction to Fundmental Movements
2. Examples of Fundamental Lessons

Vll. The Lesson

A. Sample Lesson Plan

1. Lesson plan format
2. General Presuppositions

Vlll. Control of Movement

1. Fine Motor
   1. Pouring Sequence
      1. Pouring Polished Jewels
      2. Pouring Water
      3. Teapot Pouring
   2. Spooning Sequence
      1. Scooping Stones with Two Hands
      2. Spooning Jewels from Large to Small Bowls
      3. Spooning and Sorting From One Bowl to Two Bowls
   3. Squeezing Sequence
      1. Sponge Squeezing
      2. Squeezing with One Transfer
      3. Squeezing with an Eyedropper
   4. Twisting Sequence
      1. Removing and Replacing a Thermos Lid
      2. Opening a Padlock with a Key
      3. Screwing with a Screwdriver
   5. Stringing, Lacing and Sewing
      1. Bead Stringing
      2. Lacing a Card
      3. Stringing Beads on a Pipe Cleaner
2. Gross Motor
   1. Walking on the Line

lX. Care of the Self

1. The Dressing Frames
   1. Button Frame
   2. Snap Frame
   3. Zipper Frame
   4. Hook and Eye Frame
   5. Buckle Frame
   6. Lacing Frame
   7. Bow Tying Frame
2. Additional Activities
   1. Packing a Suitcase
   2. Hand Washing
   3. Shoe Cleaning
   4. Suggested Activities
3. Care of the Environment
   1. Floor Sweeping
   2. Cleaning the Leaves of a Plant
   3. Table Scrubbing
   4. Suggestions for Additional Activities

Xl. Nutrition and Food Preparation

1. Food Preparation
2. Food for Thought
3. Discussion of Food Preparation Skills
4. Suggestions for Snack
5. Mothers’ Day Tea
6. Additional Activities
   1. Spreading Butter on a Slice of Bread
   2. Cinnamon Grating
   3. Cutting Carrots

Xll. The Montessori Teacher

1. Introductory Paragraph **(written by the student)**
2. Qualities for the Teacher to Develop
3. Characteristics of a Good Teacher
4. Evaluation Check on Myself

Northeast Montessori Institute; Revised May 2009

# Album Requirements for the Practical Life Album

The album is placed into a ring binder with sections of the album clearly tabbed. Photos of the materials presented in class will be placed in the album with appropriate lesson plans.

Please include the following in your album:

* An original cover for the album
* A title page that lists the name of the curriculum area, your name and date, the Instructor for the course and the training institute (Northeast Montessori Institute)
* Table of contents to include handouts provided by NMI and page numbers for each lesson in the album
* A philosophical introduction to the curriculum area, consisting of at least two typed pages of your impressions and understanding of the Practical Life curriculum
* Philosophy of the Practical Life Curriculum
* The Prepared Environment: a paragraph reflecting your understanding of this principle and handouts provided by NMI
* Ground rules: same as above
* Grace and Courtesy: same as above
* Elementary Movement Handouts
* The Lesson
* Control of Movement section will be organized into the following categories:
  + Pouring\*
  + Scooping and Spooning\*
  + Squeezing\*
  + Twisting\*
  + Lacing and Stringing\*

\***Note**: NMI has provided three lesson plans for each of the above areas. The student is responsible to write two additional lesson plans per area (two pouring, two scooping and squeezing, two squeezing, two twisting and two lacing and stringing), for a total of ten (10) original lesson plans. These additional lesson plans should fit into or extend the sequences of the three lesson plans provided.

* Control of Movement section continued:
  + Walking on the Line
* Care of the Self:

(two additional lesson plans)

* Care of the Environment:

(two additional lesson plans)

* Nutrition and Food Preparation:

(two additional lesson plans)

* The Teacher: a paragraph reflecting your understanding of this principle and handouts provided by NMI
* Class notes and related articles

YOUR ALBUM WILL BE A RESOURCE FOR YOU AS WELL AS OTHERS; TRY TO FIND WAYS TO MAKE IT UNIQUELY YOURS THROUGH A DEDICATION, INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES AND POEMS AND LOTS OF PHOTOS\* – ADDED TO ANNUALLY! YOUR OWN PHOTOS OF CHILDREN WITHIN YOUR CLASSROOM USING THE MATERIALS WILL BE APPRECIATED LONG AFTER THOSE CHILDREN HAVE MOVED ON.

\* These may be both of children in your classroom, as well as real life scenes of people in different cultures engaged in activities of ‘everyday living’. (You will appreciate ‘revisiting’ former students through the pictures in your albums!)

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2009

# Suggested Readings for Practical Life

The Absorbent Mind, Maria Montessori

Ch. 13 “The Importance of Movement in General Development” Ch. 14 “Intelligence and the Hand”

The Discovery of the Child, Maria Montessori

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ch. 3 | pgs., 61-63 | “Freedom to Develop” |
| Ch. 4 |  | “Nature in Education” |
| Ch. 5 |  | “Education in Movement” |

The Secret of Childhood, Maria Montessori

Ch. 7 “Psychic Development (Sensitive Periods)”

Ch. 8 “Order”

Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work, E.M Standing

Part lll “The Significance of Movement in Education”

Ch. Xl “A Visit to Lilliput”

Ch. Xlll “The Exercises of Practical Life”

Ch. XlV “Movement and Mental Assimilation”

**II. Philosophy of Practical Life Curriculum**

# Practical Life Curriculum Guide

A child entering the Montessori classroom is ideally between the ages of 2-1/2 and 3 years of age. This child will begin their orientation to the classroom in the Practical Life area of the classroom. This classroom area is also referred to as Everyday Living. Many Montessorians consider this to be the backbone of the entire curriculum, as it is in this area of the classroom where the young child gains the rudiments for all future learning experiences.

The child learns to refine his or her movements (both large and small), increasing the ability to make meaningful decisions and become more independent. Lastly, through the activities themselves and through the natural inclination within the child to repeat them over and over, the child increases his or her powers of concentration. Thus, the child is developing Coordination, Concentration, a sense of Independence, and decision making.

The development and nourishment of all kinds of action: motor, mental, and social, are really one process. The ability to concentrate and make decisions, the ability to analyze component essential movements and the ability to select, arrange and use materials appropriately are a necessary basis for all creative art, higher learning, effective human relationships and productive action.

A child gains self-confidence as he feels able to participate usefully in the society around him:

“*Dignity comes with the ability to take care of oneself, to give help to others and to maintain an environment that allows for both kinds of help*”.

(Dr. Maria Montessori)

Dr. Montessori divided her exercises of Practical Life into four main areas:

* 1. Control of Movement
  2. Care of the Person
  3. Care of the Environment (both indoor and outdoor)
  4. Grace and Courtesy

These four main areas have two levels of development. The first stage, the personal, is one in which the child has an inner urge to control his movements and will practice isolated movements separately, until mastery. The second stage is the social, in which a child who can handle himself can act consciously to help maintain the environment, can join with others in common projects, and can assist others.

The Developmental Aims of the Practical Life materials are to develop and foster:

1. a sense of order
2. small motor/muscle control
3. eye-hand coordination
4. self confidence and self esteem
5. independence
6. concentration
7. task analysis and problem solving
8. organizational skills

These aims are largely met through the proper sequencing of the material. The general sequence of the materials is:

1. difficulty of the task works from large motor coordination and strength to fine motor control with a pincer grip
2. working from 2 handed tasks to 1 handed tasks
3. working from a simple skill to multiple skills
4. having the exercises move from left to right

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, Revised June 2007

# Design Characteristics of the Practical Life Materials

1. Function and Manageability: Can it do the job? Does it handle well?
2. Aesthetic Appeal: Does the material attract the child? Is it beautiful?

Easy to handle?

1. Proportions: How well does it fit in the child’s hand?

Can the child carry it easily?

1. Completeness: Are all the necessary items for the work present

on the tray? How does the child replace disposable items?

1. Color Coordination: Do the colors enhance the activity? Do the color

compare or contrast? Is coloration an aid to the overall layout?

1. Control of Error: Is there a concrete, built in feedback mechanism

which may assist the child in working independently?

1. Safety and Respect for Tools: Are the substances non toxic? Are

the materials free of nicks or splinters? Are the tools sharp and appropriate for the task?

1. Interest: Does it arouse curiosity and invite concentration?

Does it provide a challenge?

1. Cleanliness: Is it clean? Is it washable? Does it meet standard

health requirements?

1. Price: Is the cost reasonable? Can it be easily replaced?
2. Readiness: Does it meet the child’s developmental needs?

Does it require skill and concentration?

1. Organization: Are the materials designed and organized to

engage child in self learning through independent, manipulative activity?

1. Sequence: Is there a step by step sequence to the activity

that the child can understand? Is there a beginning, middle and an end to the task?

1. Order: Are the utensils or materials laid out in an orderly

arrangement? Is there adequate space to manipulate the materials easily?

1. Adaptability: Can the exercise be modified (simplified or

increased difficulty/) Can the material lead to real life application?

1. Teaching Mode: Through demonstration by the adult followed by

repetition by the child and the addition of language.

1. Working Order: Is everything in good repair?
2. Quality: Are the materials of good quality?
3. Cultural Relevance: Do the materials or tasks relate meaningfully to the child’s culture?

Original Source: Sonja Donahue

Adapted by: Linda Seeley and Martha Monahan;

Northeast Montessori Institute

# Guidelines for Preparing the Practical Life Area

1. The environment should be clean and orderly at all times.
2. It must be beautiful but not distracting.
3. The furniture should be arranged to meet the need of the child

and the design of the curriculum area, with space provided for group and individual activities.

1. It should be uncluttered.
2. It should contain one of each activity which helps the child to develop self discipline and patience.
3. It should invite curiosity, exploration and mastery.
4. It should “speak” to the child, rather then the teacher speaking.
5. Most importantly the classroom atmosphere should abound in love, security, understanding and consistency. It is an emotionally safe environment for the children.
6. The outside environment should be as carefully prepared as the inside classroom environment.

*Think of Your Classroom Environment As Your Home!*

Source: Linda Seeley; Northeast Montessori Institute, 2001; Revised 2007

# Sequencing for Practical Life

The materials and exercises in the Practical Life area should always be sequenced with the following guidelines in mind:

1. use of hand before any tools
2. large materials to small ones (appropriate to child’s size and strength)
3. materials always presented from left to right and from top to bottom
4. gross motor to fine motor development
5. no transfer to transfer
6. two handed to one handed to two handed in opposition
7. keep in mind the medium and sequence i.e., macaroni to rice
8. use of dry materials before liquid is used
9. simple activities to complex
10. few materials to many
11. short activities to long
12. skills in isolation to skills in combination

### Basic Elements of Practical Life

1. purposeful
2. simple
3. clear
4. attractive
5. arranged in an orderly manner
6. provide for analysis and isolation of the difficulty
7. sequential within themselves and with other materials in the area
8. allow for repetition
9. allow the child to control his/her error
10. have a point of interest
11. provide activity for the hand (muscular activity)
12. provide keys to the environment
13. maintenance (by adults), activities changed frequently

# Direct Aims for the Practical Life Curriculum

1. Develop and refine small and large motor muscle control. Coordinate bodily movements especially eye hand coordination.
2. Develop the ability to concentrate (key to normalization and ability to focus attention span).
3. Provide for development of independence through mastery of one’s self and one’s environment.
4. Develop a sense of order (external order creates internal order).
5. To build self confidence and self esteem.
6. To develop good work habits: the ability to observe, organize, analyze, problem solve and complete tasks.
7. To provide the child with real and purposeful work (which leads to a sense of self worth).
8. To help develop inner discipline and self control.
9. Help to develop socialization skills (the desire to contribute to the class community and build friendships, learning of appropriate behavior and social skills).
10. To help develop memory skills (retention of sequential steps).
11. Provides indirect preparation for all other areas of the classroom.

The basic aims are: **coordination, concentration, independence** and **order** (CCIO is an easy way to remember them). These four aims should be listed in your lesson plans, as well as others you choose to be appropriate.

# Guiding Principles

Looking more carefully at the Design of the Montessori Materials it’s important to again, keep in mind the intent of the materials in that they are not learning equipment, per se, as their aim is not the external one of teaching children skills or imparting knowledge, but rather, their aim is an internal one of the child’s self-construction and psychic development. They aid development when they provide children with stimuli that capture his attention and initiate a process of concentration and self-correction.

### Guiding Principles:

1. Meaningfulness is a key;

The difficulty of error is isolated

Materials move from simple tasks or concepts to more complex Prepare the child for future learning indirectly (i.e., writing)

Begin with concrete expressions of an idea and gradually move to a more abstract representation of the idea

Materials must correspond to the inner needs of the child to serve their purpose of inner formation

Presented at the right moment of development; this moment

is determined by observation and experimentation by the teacher

The teacher watches for quality of concentration and for spontaneous repetition of actions with materials

Teacher must have flexibility around the materials and feel comfortable moving within the sequence

1. Isolation of Difficulty: The child is to discover his/her error
2. Materials progress from simple to complex in design and usage
3. Concrete expressions of an idea which gradually become more and more abstract representations
4. Control of Error: The child is in control of the learning process through this dialogue with materials

### Rules of Materials Use:

1. Treat all materials with respect and return them in original condition
2. No interruptions when using by anyone
3. Right to a fundamental lesson given by the teacher
4. Presentation is given on an individual basis
5. Teacher must have a thorough knowledge of materials:
   * precision in material presentations
   * orderly, brevity, simplicity
   * use few and simple words

Montessori:

*“The lesson must be presented in a way that the personality*

*of the teacher shall disappear. There shall remain in evidence*

*only the object to which she wishes to call the attention of the child.”*

(Absorbent Mind)

After a presentation, the child is invited to use the materials. Teacher remains and observes the child and oversees the child replacing the material to the shelf.

Repetition is the Key! When the child repeats the activity on his or her own and the teacher observes this, she knows that a match was made - a connection between the child and the material.

Creativity requires that the child is allowed to make discoveries with the materials. Some teachers present too much which then robs children of this opportunity.

Source: Martha Monahan; Northeast Montessori Institute, January 2004

# A Progression of Classroom Activities

The Practical Life area of the classroom is carefully prepared before the arrival of children to school. The materials attract the youngest children because they are somewhat familiar to them. They have seen adults and older siblings in the home perform these everyday tasks and are anxious to imitate the tasks.

The older returning children are also attracted to this area of the classroom because they have a sense of mastery with the materials and enjoy the repetition of familiar tasks. The older children, however often use them in ways that differ from the intended purpose.

After several weeks of school the younger children either loose interest in the simple fine motor skills of dry pouring, transferring, etc. or they begin to imitate their older peers. At this time, the teacher will begin to guide the children gently toward increasingly complex, multi-step activities. Montessori described the materials as a “staircase” which the children “ascend, step by step” (Spontaneous Activity in Education, pg. 83).

As the children seek further challenge in this area, the activities that isolate fine motor skills such as dry pouring and spooning decreases. The simplicity of these materials cannot sustain interest beyond the first weeks of school. These initial activities refine the mastery of movements that are incorporated into complex tasks. Three abilities provide the basic skills that will lead children to success with the multi step, complex activities such as table scrubbing, dishwashing and flower arranging.

Pouring: Initially the child pours dry objects then is introduced to water pouring. Trays for pouring must be free from any material that prevents the pitchers from sliding. The child will develop and refine his control only if he can experience the results of his movements.

Folding: Many of the washing activities include the use of a towel.

To prepare the child for folding activities begin with stitched lines indicating the folding pattern on the towel and progress to no lines on the towels.

Sponge Squeezing: The child will need the ability to manipulate a sponge to clean and wipe up spills. This sequence begins simply with bean scooping within a large basin followed by hand transfer of the beans from one container to another.

The child who has experienced pouring exercises is prepared to use a sponge. This begins with filling squeezing a sponge into a large container followed by transferring water with a sponge from one container to another.

The combination of the above skills has prepared the child for multi-step tasks involving clean-up procedures. The possibilities for these exercises are endless: washing tables, chairs, a baby doll, the floor, a blackboard, a window, etc., or polishing various objects and scrubbing vegetables for food preparation. At some point the twisting sequence is introduced to the child, preparing him or her for further multi-step activities such as painting, gluing, clay work and others.

The adult must be very patient and thorough in preparing the activities for the children. Accidents are inevitable and the room may be a mess at the end of the day! The control of error must be the child’s movements, rather than the adult substituting her movements for those of the child.

In a culture where children are spending more time in school and child care centers, it is essential to their positive development that they have the opportunity to experience the great work of Practical Life, regardless of the water spills and wet towels. Montessori placed the needs of the child above all else:

“*All these objects invite a child to do something, to carry out a real task with a practical goal to be obtained...tasks which not only require increasing skill but also a gradual development of character because of the patience necessary for their execution and the sense of responsibility for their successful accomplishment. These activities which I have just described are called exercises in practical life because the children lead a practical life and do ordinary house work with a devotion and accuracy that becomes remarkably calm and dignified*.”

(Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child; pgs. 64-65)

Source: Martha Monahan; Northeast Montessori Institute, 2004

References: “Back to the Basics” for the Montessorian: The Practical Life Foundation Article: Montessori Life (Winter 2000) by Carol S. Woods

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# III. The Prepared Environment

# Quotes by Dr. Montessori on The Prepared Environment

*“The objects surrounding the child should look solid and attractive and the “house of the child” should be lovely and pleasant in all its particulars. It is almost impossible to say that there is a mathematical relationship between the beauty of the surrounding and the activity of the child. He will make discoveries rather more voluntarily in a gracious setting than in an ugly one.”*

*“With the realization that children absorb unconsciously from their environment, it became necessary to provide a seemingly perfect learning environment for developing children. The structured environment for learning involves use of a wide range of didactic apparatus, varied activities reflecting all aspects of the child’s development, with everything being aesthetically pleasing and geared to the child’s size, needs and interests.”*

*“It is through the environment that the individual is molded and brought to perfection... since a child is formed by his environment he has need of precise and determined guides and not simply some vague constructive formulae.”*

*“Sometimes very small children in a proper environment develop a skill and exactness in their work that can only surprise us. An adult environment is not suitable for children. There must be a suitable environment for the child’s growth. Obstacles must be reduced to a minimum and the surroundings should provide the necessary means for the exercise of those activities which develop a child’s energies. Adults should not be an obstacle to a child’s independent activities, nor should they carry out for him those activities by means of which a child reaches maturity.”*

*“The room is dedicated to him, and he is free to move about in it, talk, and apply himself to intelligent and formative kinds of work.”*

Source: Compiled by Linda Seeley; Northeast Montessori Institute

# The Seven Basic Components of the Prepared Environment

1. The Concept of Freedom
2. Structure and Order
3. Reality and Nature
4. Beauty and Atmosphere
5. The Montessori Materials
6. The Development of Community Life
7. The Adult (teacher)

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2001

# Daily Maintenance Check List

1. Check that all the furnishings are in their proper place; for examples, chairs are pushed into the tables, area rugs are straightened tables in their correct position, etc.
2. Tables and chairs have been wiped off and if required disinfected.
3. Check each area of the classroom, are the activities neatly displayed on the shelves, for example, books in the library area are straightened and neat.
4. Check all the curriculum shelves making sure materials are in proper sequence on the shelves.
5. Check that all materials have all the necessary parts needed to accomplish the activity; for example, are all the math materials complete in terms of objects to be counted, etc.
6. Check that all the materials are in good repair and complete. Any broken materials have been removed.
7. Check that all the supplies have been replaced in activities that require items; for example, paper for the metal insets work, pencils for all written work, etc. All those supplies are in good repair; for example, pencils are sharpened.
8. Have the activities that require water and sponge work been cleaned and refreshed; for example, sponges rinsed and new water put into the activities, etc.? (Some of the final steps in this process may need to be done before class, for example, wetting sponges, etc.)
9. Has the overall environment been checked for necessary redoing; for example, pictures on the walls that may need readjusting or any specific touching up that may help to maintain the orderliness and aesthetic attractiveness of the room? (This task does not refer to the overall changes which take place when the environment is redesigned more dramatically at certain times during the year, but rather the more subtle refreshing of the aesthetics in the room).
10. If janitorial services are not available on a daily basis, have the waste baskets been emptied, the floors swept and the rugs vacuumed? (Basic janitorial tasks would also apply to the classroom bathroom).

At the first reading, this may seem like a long and involved list of maintenance jobs to be done on a daily basis. However, these are all necessary requirements for maintaining a “prepared environment”.

There are two factors which will help to make the overall job easier:

* 1. the increasing normalization of the children
  2. the fact that when done on a daily basis, each job becomes easier as

the classroom is kept in good maintenance condition throughout the year

In addition, the time and energy which is spent in these daily maintenance routines will be greatly rewarded with the satisfying sense that adults and children have when working in an environment that is attractive and pleasing to be in, and well organized to enhance productive activity and developmental learning.

It would be recommended that the daily classroom preparation be done after the class session or day’s routine and shared by the head teacher and assistant’s. In this way, it provides the opportunity for informal discussion of the day’s events and the children. It also provides an opportunity while working together in the classroom for deciding upon environmental changes.

There are situations where it will become necessary for one teacher to coordinate the ending group time while the other teacher “cleans” the classroom during actual class time. In a few cases, this routine may be the only option. However, it is recommended that the staff remain involved with the children, for example the ending group time be shared by the classroom staff. These interactions between the children and the adults are important. After the children have been dismissed, whether at the end of a morning, afternoon or all day session, is the appropriate time for the adults to work together preparing the environment for the next day and sharing their ideas and thoughts about the environment and the children.

If you find the maintenance tasks are pulling you away from your involvement with the children while they are at school, it might be the time to ask yourself what your primary role is in the school; teacher (assistant) or maintenance worker? Maybe the schedule and routines need to be re-evaluated.

One last thought, try to make the daily maintenance similar to the initial preparation and design of the classroom, a creative challenge! It actually can be fun and satisfying to view your classroom at the end of the day and feel good about its preparation for the following school day. It is even a better feeling to walk in the next morning and have a beautiful classroom ready for the start of a new day!

Source: Ann Neubert: Understanding the Child; Northeast Montessori Institute

# Paying Attention to Details;

**The Teacher and the Early Childhood Classroom**

1. Maintain a certain calm presence in the classroom.
2. Avoid verbalizing judgments (good or bad) when unsolicited or unnecessary.
3. Use Montessori equipment the same way the children have been taught.
4. Carry the equipment the same way the children have been taught.
5. Drop items into the trash rather than tossing them from a distance.
6. Avoid stepping over mats; walk around instead.
7. Try to avoid talking to other children or teacher while giving a lesson.
8. Keep voice soft and clear and pleasant.
9. Speak only as necessary when giving lessons.
10. Avoid giving too much help.
11. Don’t expect the children to do what they have not been taught.
12. Plan group activities; be aware of the time of day, previous activity, weather, number of children, spaces available, etc.
13. Have all materials gathered and prepared in advance for special projects.
14. Avoid inviting a child for a presentation that may be interrupted in a predictable way.
15. Be willing to disrupt plans if necessary for the good of the group.
16. Respect children’s names in tone, pronunciation and spelling
17. Pre-read classroom books for appropriateness, reality and flow.
18. Take regular time to observe the class, an individual child or a group interaction.
19. Be aware of the handedness of the child and present lessons accordingly.
20. Take notes of child’s errors for re-teaching at another time.
21. Remember to pre-select and arrange materials before approaching a child for a lesson.
22. Keep careful and up-to-date records on each child.
23. Make appropriate time for meaningful discussion with parents.
24. Wear appropriate clothing and shoes for comfort and pleasant appearance.
25. Be aware of materials in classroom that are not selected by the children; be ready to rotate materials to create new interest.
26. Sound of the teacher’s bell should gently call the children’s attention.
27. Keep tissue and paper towels on hand in the classroom.
28. Be aware of classroom lightening and ventilation.
29. Be aware of and take action on dripping faucets, loose screws and squeaking doors.
30. Correct the peeling or curling of tape used for the line or circle.
31. Be alert for dull scissors, unsharpened pencils, and paper supplies.
32. Coat and apron hooks should be at appropriate height and adequate in number.
33. Easels and blackboards should be appropriate size with related equipment handy.
34. Check for dirty or frayed mats and replace or clean if necessary.
35. Classroom plants and animals should be healthy and well protected.
36. Leftovers from projects and exercises should be taken care of right away to avoid clutter and waste.
37. Be aware of the traffic flow in the classroom; take out items not used.
38. Avoid insulting the child’s intelligence by teaching things the child already knows.

Source: Montessori Reporter

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# IV. The Ground Rules

# Ground Rules

In the prepared environment, there are certain “ground rules” designed to protect the collective good of the community, as well as the individual child.

All ground rules should follow these basic requirements:

* 1. They should be presented in a positive manner.
  2. They should be concise and easy to understand.
  3. The total number of ground rules should be kept to a limit.
  4. Each should emphasize the main point of interest operating in the environment.
     1. Respect for others.
     2. Respect for the classroom materials and furnishings.
     3. Benefit for the entire group.
  5. Each ground rule should have a control of error.
     1. No ambiguity.
     2. Should be understood and accepted by all.
     3. Should convey a freeing, not a controlling theme.

### Freedom vs. Discipline

The idea of freedom versus discipline is of primary consideration when discussing basic ground rules in a Montessori environment. These two terms are not contradictory, but rather, interdependent and consistent. Montessori believed that “No one can be free unless he is independent; therefore, the first active manifestation of the child’s individual liberty must be guided so that, through this (activity), he may arrive at independence.”

Freedom is an inner sense, as is discipline. They must come from within the child, not as a result of external pressure or restraint.

The classroom environment should nurture the growth of the individual child’s self discipline by providing him with the opportunity to:

1. Pursue areas of special interest
2. Make choices
3. Solve problems

These opportunities and resultant growth must be done within specific limits or guidelines which don’t hinder the child’s spontaneity or freedom, but rather, provide the foundation for the child’s basic understanding of right and wrong.

The prepared environment should provide a structure which allows for the child to experience:

1. Freedom of movement
2. Natural development within an ordered environment
3. Freedom of choice

Because we are interested and concerned with the development of freedom which allows for the mutual respect and growth of each individual child within the group setting, there is a need to establish certain standards or limits to maintain individual and group freedom.

These standards referred to as “ground rules” assist in reinforcing the necessary structure within the environment.

Source: Linda Seeley; Northeast Montessori Institute

# Suggested Ground Rules for a Montessori Classroom

1. All children have the freedom to choose and work with any materials within the classrooms as long as she/he uses them with respect. This is essential to the child’s feeling of the classroom being his/her own and the subsequent sense of responsibility. If the child chooses work far too difficult, he/she generally explores it and then replaces it on the shelf. The teacher may then direct the child to a more appropriate activity. One exception to this rule might be food preparation that involves sharp utensils; then a child must ask for a lesson before doing the activity.
2. Work may be done at a table or a mat. Some activities are more adequately suited to one or the other which can be discussed during the initial presentation.
3. Children must walk in the classroom.
4. Children need to use “indoor” voices so as not to interrupt the concentration of another child. This, too, reinforces a feeling of responsibility toward and a connection with all the other children. This is also important to the idea of being a member of a group.
5. Children must restore order to each activity before returning it to the shelf.
6. A child must return all work to its proper place on the shelf. If he/she cannot remember its place, he/she must ask a teacher or a friend.
7. Tables must be cleaned, chairs pushed in, rugs rolled and put away before the child moves on to another activity.
8. A child may work with any one activity for as long as he/she chooses. Since repetition is crucial to internalization, this rule is a necessity.
9. No child may interfere with the work of another. This says that every child in the classroom has rights that need to be respected and protected.
10. Children may work together only with the consent of all parties involved. Often the arrangement of tables and chairs dictates the number of children that may work together at one time.
11. Every child has the right to refuse a lesson.
12. Children are free to observe as long as they are not disruptive. Observation is a learning tool and style used frequently by many children. This way of learning greatly sharpens the power of observation which is a very useful skill in and of itself.
13. Ringing of the bell means to stop moving and listen. This is a necessary technique for calling to attention to give a message and as a safety precaution.
14. Children must not interrupt but learn to wait their turn.
15. Children must not be allowed to harm others or their environment. This needs to be understood from the very beginning.
16. When sitting at the circle, a hand needs to be raised when a child has something to say. This guarantees that each child will have a chance to speak without interruption.
17. We often discuss at the group just how important it is to have and follow these rules so that we can all enjoy ourselves and our classroom. By verbally giving the responsibility of all these rules to each child in a very positive manner, every one is generally willing to, and often adamant about following the rules.
18. By establishing the ground rules as quickly as possible, every child gains a sense of security because the expectations are known. With that worry out of the way all concentration may be given to the work at hand.
19. Ultimately, the children become the keepers of their environment. The ground rules, once accepted and internalized, maintain an easy and comfortable atmosphere in the class.

# V. Grace and Courtesy

# Grace and Courtesy

The exercises of Grace and Courtesy should be impressed upon the children through role-modeling by the adults in the environment. The adults must constantly and consistently use proper etiquette and good manners to instill in the children a respect and appreciation for the world around them.

Through the adult’s daily display of acts of kindness, consideration, and sense of responsibility and respect for the rights of others, the children will grow up to be caring human beings.

In certain circumstances exercises can be designed by the adults to illustrate proper conduct or behavior. The following is a list of activities that could become classroom exercises in grace and courtesy:

* Greeting people (shaking hands, etc.)
* Thanking friends
* Apologizing (how and when)
* Offering something to someone
* Offering something sharp to someone (blunt end first)
* Inviting someone in
* Receiving a visitor
* Standing up when older people approach
* Letting someone pass
* Asking permission to pass someone
* Asking for something
* Interrupting other people who are talking
* Speaking softly
* Knocking at a door and waiting for permission to enter
* Watching others work without disturbing or interfering
* Walking without stepping on other children’s mats or work
* Waiting for turns
* Picking up something someone has dropped and returning it
* Covering a sneeze, yawn or cough
* Holding a door for other to pass through
* Entering and leaving a room
* Table manners
* Answering the phone
* Answering the door

# Grace and Courtesy for Adults in a Montessori Classroom

1. Kneel or stoop to a child’s level when speaking to him/her. Bending over is better than not lowering yourself, but stooping or sitting in a small chair is preferred.
2. Address children and adults by their name.
3. Address groups of children as “children”, “boys and girls”, “class”, “people”. Try to avoid “guys”.
4. Use specific, descriptive terminology: “Please put the scissors on the top shelf” versus “Pleas put those there”.
5. Use as quiet tone as possible which will work to get your message across. A pleasant, friendly tone usually works well.
6. Take time to enjoy friendly conversations with the children.
7. Wear clothing that is attractive, in good repair, and professional in appearance.
8. Move gracefully, subtly and slowly through the environment.
9. Do not carry loads of objects in front of the children. We ask them to carry only one item at a time (trays are helpful for carrying items as well).
10. Always unroll the rug on the floor first before retrieving the material from the shelf. When the work is finished, carry the work back to the shelf and then make another trip for the rug.
11. Always tuck your chair under the table when you leave for any reason. Do this without objects in your hand.
12. We should make a point of not yelling or talking across the room. We ask the children to walk up to a person to talk to them.
13. When the bell rings (or a rainstick turns) in the classroom, stop and listen.
14. Be extra careful to say “please”, “thank you”, “excuse me”, etc. to and in front of the children at the appropriate times.
15. Treat each child with respect at all times. Humiliation, nagging, intimidation and punishments are not only damaging, but they don’t work in the long run anyway. Encouragement, warmth, caring, clear directions, high expectations and “you can do it” message do!

# 

# VI. Fundamental Movements

# Fundamental Movements (Preliminary Exercises)

Preliminary lessons are given to the child before presenting actual materials or lessons; they seem to have no purpose in themselves. They are of such a nature as to help the child develop skills necessary for other activities.

Just as the Practical Life exercises are fulfilled through later activities at later stages of development, preliminary exercises are fulfilled in the child having the skills and confidence to carry out later applied exercises in the environment. Preliminary exercises are often given to break down a more complex activity and isolate certain parts of that activity that the child may better focus on them and acquire the necessary skills for carrying out the greater activity.

### Handling a Chair:

**Pulling out a Chair:**

* approach chair from back with one foot forward to maintain balance
* bending slightly at the knees, grasp outside rungs of the back of the chair close to the seat, curling fingers
* lift chair slightly off the floor and straighten posture
* step backwards bringing feet together
* set the chair down gently in a 3 part motion
  + front left leg
  + front right leg
  + two back legs
* step away from the chair

### Carrying a Chair:

* approach the chair from either side with one foot forward for balance
* bending slightly at the knees, grasp front and back of seat in the middle
* lift chair and straighten posture
* raise to chest level, elbows in at sides, hands extended slightly holding chair out from body
* carry the chair to the destination and set down as described above

### Pushing a Chair under the Table:

* approach the chair from the back with one foot forward for balance
* bend knees slightly, and grasp outside rungs of the chair
* lift chair slightly keeping knees bent
* extend arms so chair is positioned under the table
* step forward
* gently put down chair, two back legs first, then front legs
* release the chair and stand up

### Handling Mats:

**Carrying a Mat:**

* approach mat with one foot forward for balance
* bending slightly at the knees grasp rolled mat and turn it vertically, holding it close to the body with both hands
* carry to desired location
* set mat down with open end towards you

### Un- Rolling a Mat:

* set mat on floor with open flap toward you
* kneel facing the middle of the mat
* secure loose flap of the mat with one hand and gently unroll the mat by pushing with the opposite hand, smoothing the mat as it is unrolled

### Rolling a Mat:

* kneel before one end of the mat
* grasp edge of mat with both hands, equal distances from outer edge
* fold mat over with both hands until edge many be rolled
* slowly roll mat until it is at arm’s length
* pull mat slowly towards you, checking that the ends are even
* continue rolling the mat as described above

### Carrying a Tray:

* approach the tray with the body directly in front of it
* with hands opposite each other, grasp outsides of the tray with thumbs on the edges and fingers underneath
* slide tray slightly towards the body, then slowly lift the tray
* with elbows slightly bent and drawn in towards body, carry the tray to desired work area
* slowly lower the tray to surface, keeping it level

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute

# Suggestions for Lessons in Fundamental Movements

The activities listed below cannot, of course, be complete. The activities to be presented take into consideration the external environment and the individual needs of each child and the community as a whole. Activities need to be carefully analyzed to determine which elementary movements need to be addressed to make the lesson successful for the child.

Suggestions for Lessons in Elementary Movements:

How to enter a room How to walk in the room How to stand in a line How to get into a line How to walk in a line

How to walk up and down stairs

How to open a door How to close a door

How to open and close a door

How to get a drink of water

What do you do when you need to go to the bathroom

How to sit on the floor How to sit in a chair

How to stand up from a chair

How to stand up when seated at a table How to carry a chair to another place

How to carry a basket How to carry a tray

How to carry a tray with something on it How to return a tray to the shelf

How to carry a pitcher

How to carry a pitcher with water in it How to carry a bucket

How to carry a bucket with water in it

How to carry a rug How to unroll a rug How to roll a rug

How to walk around a rug

How to give attention at a command How to talk softly

How to go near a person to talk to them

How to carry a book

How to turn the pages of a book How to place a book on the table

How to carry scissors

How to hand scissors to another person How to pick up something from the floor

Each activity consists of a series of logically sequential steps which are demonstrated to the child. These elementary movements are taught to the children collectively at group circle and lay the foundation for classroom ground-rules procedures as well as Grace and Courtesy.

Source: Linda Seeley; Northeast Montessori Institute 2007

# VII. The Lesson

# Sample Lesson Plan Format

**Name of Activity: Straight forward name of activity Area:** General: i.e., Practical Life

Specific: i.e., Care of the Person

**Materials:** Every object necessary for the activity including the clean up.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | (Philosophical)  The internal skills that the child develops, i.e., concentration, balance, sense of order, etc. The teacher’s intent for the child’s |
|  |  | growth and development. |
|  | Indirect: | (Practical)  The tasks to accomplish while building the direct skills; the child’s intent for doing this activity. |

**Preparation:** The skills needed by the child before she can be successful with this exercise.

**Age:** An estimation; can be stated in terms of first year, second year, third year, or by age in years or half years.

**Presentation of the Lesson:** The initial presentation by the teacher, a description of actions

from start to finish.

**Work of the Teacher:**

Points of Emphasis: things to highlight during the lesson Language: General suggestion, not a script, notation of

specific words pertinent to the activity.

**Points of Interest:** The attention-getters built into the materials which motivate the child to work with the activity.

**Work of the Child:**

Points of Consciousness: The discoveries we would like the child to internalize:

these may relate to direct aims.

**Control of Error:** Aspects of the materials, the set- up and the teacher presentation that gives a child feedback about her success and help her correct the process independent of a teacher

**Variations:** Changes within the range of the materials in use, sequence or scope, to vary but not make the activity more difficult

**Extensions:** Use of this technique in other activities, with additional materials or different materials. Task becomes more complex.

**Sources:** Generally you will source presenter and NMI example: Martha Monahan, NMI; Written by (your name). Source others when appropriate or ifwritten as a group.

### Name of Activity:

**Area:** General: Specific:

### Materials:

**Aims:** Direct: Indirect:

### Preparation: Age:

**Presentation of the Lesson:**

**(use back of page)**

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Language:

### Points of Interest: Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness:

### Control of Error: Variations: Extensions: Source:

**General Presuppositions to Lesson Plans**

Presuppositions are general overall guidelines that pertain to all lessons in the Montessori classroom. These do not need to be written into each lesson plan, as it is assumed that they are taking place as part of the lesson.

1. All necessary materials to complete the activity must be present and in order on the shelf. This includes any items for clean up within the activity.
2. Tools should be placed in a non -preferential position in regards to dominance. The handle should face the child rather than being turned to the right or left.
3. Invite the child to the activity.
4. Name the activity at the shelf and show the child the location of material on the shelf.
5. If the activity requires a rug, get it our and unroll it on the floor before removing work from the shelf. This establishes the workspace for the child.
6. If the activity requires large amounts of water, clean up, or food preparation, put on an apron.
7. Remove tray from the shelf and carry it with 2 hands. Center one hand on each side, thumbs up on both sides, fingers on the bottom.
8. Walk carefully and slowly.
9. Place activity on the table (or rug), then pull out the chair using both hands.
10. Sit so that the child is on the sub dominant side of the teacher during the presentation, so that the teacher’s arm does not block the child’s view. This will be the child’s dominant side if both are right handed. If not, make any necessary adjustments.
11. Place basket, container, tray, or whatever is not being used in upper left hand corner of work space. This avoids clutter.
12. Place smaller objects in front.
13. The lesson should be clear and objective.
14. Any necessary language should be clear and concise (non verbal when possible).
15. Movements generally go from left to right and right to left when returning objects to their proper place.
16. If the child indicates a desire to try any part of the activity during the demonstration, invite him/her to do so. Observe how the child handles the material. If the child has difficulty, re-demonstrate but do not show concern for the error.
17. Return all items to their original and proper order after presentation.
18. When finished with the activity, replace any necessary items, making sure that the activity is complete for the next person.
19. Check work space to make sure that it is clean.
20. Thank the child for participating in the activity with you. Re-invite the child to the activity. If the child is not interested it is the teacher’s responsibility to return the work to the shelf since she/he initiated the work.
21. Depending on the particular child and the particular activity, the teacher should use discretion as to when to leave the child alone with the work. For many presentations, the teacher may choose to remain throughout the child’s entire cycle of activity.
22. Stand up; push in chair with both hands before returning activity to its proper place on the shelf.
23. All aged children can use the materials, as long as they handle them with respect.
24. The focus is on the material, not the teacher.
25. Circular motions should be counter clock wise as a preparation for writing.
26. The tasks are culturally appropriate.
27. There is sequencing: within the environment

within the specific area within the material

The order is: large to small

arms to hands to fingers hand to tools

simple to complex

Practical Life forms the physical basis for all the other activities in the classroom. Always respect the child’s dignity.

Source: Linda Seeley; Northeast Montessori Institute, 1996, Revised 2007

### 

### VIII. Control of Movement

### 

A. Fine Motor

### Pouring

### Name of Activity: Pouring Polished Jewels

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Pouring

**Materials:** A tray with two clear tumblers, tumbler on the left is filled with polished jewels.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order |
|  | Indirect: | To learn how to pour |

**Preparation:** Sand and water play, carrying a tray

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

* 1. Grasp the tumbler on the left with a whole hand grasp of the dominant hand.
  2. Use the subdominant hand to steady the tumbler.
  3. Move the tumbler to the right side of the second tumbler.
  4. Center the tumbler above the second tumbler and pour slowly.
  5. Replace tumbler to position on the left.
  6. Repeat the pouring sequence, returning the polished jewels to the pitcher on the left.
  7. Check for any spills.
  8. Return tray to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Careful handling of the materials, pouring slowly. Language: Nonverbal presentation initially, later jewels,

tumbler.

**Points of Interest:** Beauty of the material, sound of the jewels when poured.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The arm and hand control the flow and speed of the pouring.

**Control of Error:** Spilled jewels.

**Variations:** Change the tray, the tumblers and the contents.

**Extensions:** Snack preparation and cooking activities

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: Pouring Water

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Pouring

**Materials:** A tray containing 2 medium sized glass pitchers with handles and a cloth.

The pitcher on the left is ½ filled with colored water)

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for the development of concentration,

coordination, independence and order Indirect: To master pouring with a pitcher

**Preparation:** Dry pouring **Age:** First Year **Presentation of the Lesson:**

1. Emphasize how to grasp the handle of the pitcher on the left with the dominant hand (two fingers in the loop of the handle and the thumb on top of the pitcher handle.)
2. Use the sub dominant hand to steady and guide the pitcher.
3. Move the pitcher to the right side of the empty pitcher.
4. Pause and look inside the empty pitcher.
5. Pour slowly from above into empty pitcher.
6. Hold over pitcher until last drop drips.
7. Set pitcher down carefully and wipe spout with cloth.
8. Check for any spills on the tray or table. If necessary, wipe the spills with the cloth.
9. Repeat the pouring sequence returning the water to the pitcher on the left side of the tray.
10. Again, check for spills
11. Return the work to the shelf

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Model the proper grasp of the handles, waiting for

the last drop to fall, pouring slowly, checking for spills.

Language: Non verbal first presentation, later pitcher, spout, handle.

**Points of Interest** Beauty of the material, colored water, sound of the water as it is poured.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The arm and hand control the flow and

speed of the pouring.

**Control of Error:** Spilled water.

**Variations:** Change the color of the water, tray or cloth.

Change the pitchers yet keeping them the same size.

**Extensions:** Pouring juice or water for snack.

Cooking activities, science, gardening.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: Teapot Pouring

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Pouring

**Materials:** A tray, a small teapot, 3 small teacups, a cloth

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for the development of concentration,

coordination, independence and order Indirect: To master pouring with a teapot

**Preparation:** Dry poring and wet pouring activities, pouring from one container to several containers

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

* 1. Emphasize how to grasp the handle of the teapot on the left with the dominant hand (two fingers in the loop of the handle and the thumb on top of the pitcher handle).
  2. Use the sub dominant hand to steady and guide the pitcher.
  3. Position the teapot above the teacup at the top pf the tray.
  4. Remove the support of the sub dominant hand but use two fingers of the dominant hand to secure the lid of the teapot.
  5. Pour slowly from above into the teacup, waiting for the last drip.
  6. Gently bring the teapot to an upright position.
  7. Position above the middle teacup and repeat the pouring sequence.
  8. Gently bring the teapot to an up right position and position above the last teacup.
  9. Repeat the pouring sequence, again, waiting for the last drip.
  10. If necessary, wipe the spout of the teapot and check for any spills on the tray or the table.
  11. Remove the lid of the teapot and set it gently on the tray.
  12. Pick up the teacup at the top of the tray with the dominant hand and slowly pour the water back into the teapot.
  13. Repeat with remaining teacups.
  14. Replace the lid on the teapot.
  15. Return work to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Modeling pouring carefully, waiting for the

last drip, securing the lid of the teapot.

Language: Nonverbal for first presentation but later teapot, lid, teacup.

**Points of Interest** Beauty and cultural origin of the teapot and teacups.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The hand controls the flow of the water.

**Control of Error:** Spilled water on the tray or table.

**Variations:** Vary the teapot and teacups.

**Extensions:** Introduce a tea ceremony and explore the cultural origin of the teapot. Grace and Courtesy of serving a guest tea.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

Spooning

### Name of Activity: Scooping Stones with Two Hands

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Scooping and Spooning

**Materials:** Wooden bowl filed ½-way with colored stones

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for the development of concentration,

independence and order

Indirect: To gain the ability and coordination to scoop with two hands

**Preparation:** Sand and water play **Age:** First Year **Presentation of the Lesson:**

1. Pause to appreciate the work before you.
2. Demonstrate scooping motion with two hands.
3. Place both hands into the bowl.
4. Pick up colored stones with cupped hands.
5. Let stones slowly fall between hands.
6. Repeat as necessary.
7. Check for spilled stones on the table.
8. Tidy up work area.
9. Return bowl to shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Cupping hands and releasing the stones.

Language: Nonverbal first presentation. Later, aquarium rocks, wooden bowl.

**Points of Interest:** Beauty of the material, sight, sound and feel of the stones.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Hands can be used as scoops.

**Control of Error:** Spilled stones on the table.

**Variations:** Use objects from nature such as acorns, shells, pebbles, etc.

**Extensions:** Scoop with hands into smaller bowls or add a tool such as a wooden scoop or spoon

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: Spooning Jewels from Large Bowl to Smaller Bowl

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Scooping and Spooning

**Materials:** Tray with a rice spoon, smaller bowl, larger bowl with colored jewels

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for the development of concentration,

independence and order

Indirect: Preparing the child for spooning from a large container to a smaller container

**Preparation:** Previous spooning activities

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Using the dominant hand, grasp the rice spoon
2. Place the spoon in the large bowl
3. Spoon jewels in forward motion towards you
4. Using the subdominant hand, tilt the bowl towards you to spoon the remaining jewels
5. Reverse the above steps, spooning the jewels from the small bowl back to the large bowl
6. Place the spoon down carefully between the bowls
7. Check for any spills and tidy up the work
8. Return the tray to the shelf

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Tilting the bowl to get all the jewels. Language: Non verbal presentation. Later; rice spoon,

jewel, etc.

**Points of Interest** Beauty and cultural origin of the bowls and spoons, jewels, sound of the jewels.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: A spoon (tool) can be used for spooning.

**Control of Error:** Spilled jewels.

**Variations:** Change bowl, spoon, tray and medium in the bowl.

**Extensions:** Cooking and gardening activities.

**Source:** Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: Spooning and Sorting From One Bowl to Two

**Separate Bowls**

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Scooping and spooning

**Materials:** Bowl containing yellow and blue jewels, 2 empty bowls, a tray and a metal spoon

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | independence and order |
|  | Indirect: | To coordinate the spooning motion and to sort by color |

**Preparation:** Previous spooning and sorting activities

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Pick up the spoon with the dominant hand, using a pincer grip.
2. Place spoon in bowl and scoop one jewel.
3. Place this jewel in the bowl on the left of the tray.
4. Spoon another jewel into the spoon and compare the color of the

jewel to the one in the first bowl. If it is the same drop it into the bowl. If it is different, place the jewel in the bowl on the right.

1. Continue spooning and sorting the jewels into the 2 bowls.
2. Spoon jewels from the bowl on the left into the central bowl, to get out the last jewels, it may be necessary to tilt the bowl towards you, using the subdominant hand.
3. Repeat spooning jewels to the central bowl with the bowl on the left.
4. Tidy up work area and return tray to shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Modeling how to sort the jewels into two

separate containers.

Language: Non verbal first presentation: Later sorting, color of jewels, cultural origin of bowls.

**Points of Interest:** Beauty of the jewels, sound of the jewels dropping into the bowl, cultural origin of the bowls and spoon.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Process of sorting and spoons as found in many

cultures and are used for the same purpose.

**Control of Error:** Jewels are sorted properly by color.

**Variations:** Bowls from other cultures, spoons from other cultures, tray, medium being sorted.

**Extensions:** Sort more objects.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute 2008

Squeezing

### Name of Activity: Sponge Squeezing

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Squeezing

**Materials:** A clear bowl ¼ filled with water, a sea sponge and a dry cloth on a tray

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, coordination, independence and order |
|  | Indirect: | To develop a squeezing technique and to learn the use of a sponge. |

**Preparation:** Working with clay **Age:** First Year **Presentation of the Lesson:**

1. Pick up the sponge with the dominant hand and observe the beauty and uniqueness of the sponge.
2. Using both hands place the sponge in the bowl and push it to the bottom of the bowl.
3. Observe how the sponge absorbs all the water.
4. Lift the sponge and using both hands, squeeze all of the water out of the sponge, back into the bowl.
5. Emphasize squeezing a couple of times to get out all the drops of water.
6. Repeat if interested.
7. Grasp the cloth with the dominant hand and tidy up any spills use cloth to wipe off hands.
8. If the cloth is wet, replace with a dry cloth from the supply shelf and put wet cloth in the hamper for washing.
9. Return tray to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Facial expressions, waiting for all the water to be

absorbed, using two hands to squeeze the sponge.

Language: Nonverbal first presentation, later sea sponge (once alive!), squeeze, absorb.

**Points of Interest** The natural sponge itself, as well as the texture of the sponge.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The sponge can absorb water

**Control of Error:** The amount of water in the bowl (just enough to be fully absorbed), spills.

**Variations:** Change the color of the water, the tray or sponge.

**Extensions:** Extend to cleaning activities involving a sponge.

Different colored sponges for table spills and floor spills.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: Squeezing With One Transfer

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Squeezing

**Materials:** A tray containing a bowl ½ filled with water, an empty bowl, a sea sponge and a cloth.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | Learning to transfer water with a sponge |

**Preparation:** Previous sponging activities

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Pick up the sponge with the dominant hand and transfer to both hands.
2. Place sponge in the bowl of water.
3. Using both hands, gently push the sponge to the bottom of the bowl.
4. Pause as the sponge absorbs some of the water.
5. Lift sponge above the bowl pausing to allow any droplets to fall back into the bowl.
6. Move sponge over and above the empty bowl on the right.
7. Using both hands, squeeze all of the water out of the sponge
8. Repeats steps until all of the water has been transferred from the left bowl to the right bowl.
9. Reverse the procedure, transferring all of the water from the bowl on the right to the bowl on the left.
10. Wipe up any spills on the tray and table. Use the cloth to wipe your hands.
11. Replace cloth with a dry cloth and place wet cloth in the hamper.
12. Return tray to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Squeezing with 2 hands, facial expressions. Language: Non verbal first presentation, later: transfer,

origin of the sponge.

**Points of Interest:** The sea sponge, hearing the water being released in the bowl, the sponge absorbs water.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Sponges can absorb water and water can be

transferred using a sponge.

**Control of Error:** Spilled water

**Variations:** Change the color of the water, the sponge, the bowls or the tray.

**Extensions:** Cleaning activities involving a sponge and the transfer of water using a sponge.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: Squeezing with an Eyedropper

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Squeezing

**Materials:** An eye dropper in a bottle of colored water, a soap, suction cup on a tray, a cloth

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for the development of concentration,

coordination, independence and order.

Indirect: Learning to use an eye dropper

**Preparation:** Previous squeezing activities

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Secure the base of the eye dropper bottle with the subdominant hand.
2. Grasp the cap of the dropper bottle with fingers of the dominant hand.
3. Twist off the cap using a counterclockwise motion.
4. Lift the eye dropper clear of the bottle and move over and above the suction cup.
5. Place end of dropper over small suction circle on soap pad.
6. Squeeze slowly and gently until one drop is formed and placed on a suction circle.
7. Repeat squeezing single drops of water onto the suction circles.
8. Refill the eye dropper with water when necessary.
9. When finished filling the suction cup, squeeze any remaining water from dropper back into the bottle.
10. Squeeze rubber tip of the eye dropper.
11. Beginning with the top left suction circle, gather water droplet back into the eye dropper.
12. Squeeze water back into the bottle.
13. Continue transferring each water droplet back into the bottle.
14. Place eye dropper into the bottle and twist the bottle closed using a clockwise twisting motion.
15. Emphasize that the lid is securely closed.
16. Tidy up the tray if necessary.
17. Return materials to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Model squeezing motion, only one drop of water

at a time.

Language: Nonverbal for first presentation.

Later, eye dropper, bottle, soap suction cup.

**Points of Interest** Placing the droplet precisely in the suction circle.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Air suction holds the water in the dropper

**Control of Error:** Droplet on each suction circle

**Variations:** Change color of the water and bottle

**Extensions:** Coloring mixing in art projects

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

Twisting

### Name of Activity: Removing and Replacing Thermos Lid

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Twisting

**Materials:** A basket with a thermos with inner and outer lids.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | Learn to coordinate twisting motion |

**Preparation:** Previous twisting activities.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Grasp and lift the thermos out of the basket with dominant hand and place in upright position.
2. Grasp and secure the thermos with the subdominant hand.
3. Examine the palm of the dominant hand.
4. Grasp outer lid of the thermos with the palm of the dominant hand.
5. Twist lid ½ way counterclockwise, pause, and remove hand.
6. Realign dominant hand to finish twisting off the lid of the thermos.
7. Place lid beside the thermos.
8. Repeat the twisting sequence with the inner lid.
9. Draw attention to the threads on the lid by running finger on them.
10. Align thread of inner lid.
11. Twist inner lid clockwise ½ way, pause and remove hand.
12. Repeat clockwise twist to tighten.
13. Repeat process with outer lid.
14. Replace the thermos in the basket.
15. Return basket of materials to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Positioning of the hands, making a point to

twist slowly and stop, remove lids in counterclockwise manner and replacing lids using a clockwise manner.

Language: Non verbal first presentation: Later: thermos, lid, threads.

**Points of Interest:** The thermos and the threads on the lids.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Twisting and untwisting are opposite

movements.

**Control of Error:** Lid will not close properly if threads are not aligned.

**Variations:** Change the color of the thermos.

**Extensions:** A thermos with a pop-up straw, pouring contents of the thermos into the outer lid (used as a cup). Go on a picnic. Pack and unpack a lunch box.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

**Name of Activity: Opening a Padlock with a Key**

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Twisting

**Materials:** A large padlock with a key attached by a string to a basket.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | To learn how to open a padlock with a key. |

**Preparation:** Previous twisting activities.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Grasp the padlock with the dominant hand and remove it from the basket. Sense the weight of the padlock in your hand.
2. Place the padlock upright on the table.
3. Show the child the key.
4. Pick up the padlock with your subdominant hand and turn so the child has a clear view of the keyhole.
5. Draw attention to the keyhole.
6. Pick up the key with your dominant hand.
7. Slowly insert the key into the keyhole.
8. Nod approvingly or disapprovingly according to the fit.
9. Twist slowly in counterclockwise manner.
10. Listen for the click of the lock.
11. Remove key from the lock and set aside.
12. Set padlock down to observe open lock.
13. Hold base of the padlock with the sub dominant hand.
14. Place dominant palm on padlock’s loop.
15. Push with dominant hand.
16. Listen for the click.
17. Repeat if necessary.
18. Place padlock in the basket and return it to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: The weight of the padlock and the clicking

sound as padlock opens and closes.

Language: Non verbal first presentation. Later; padlock, key, keyhole.

**Points of Interest:** The padlock itself and the clicking sound it makes when it engages.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The wrist and hand control the twisting

motion of the key.

**Control of Error:** Key needs to fit properly in the lock.

**Variations:** Change the size and color of the padlocks

**Extensions:** Explore other types of locks, a lock board, real life experiences of using a lock.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: Screwing with a Screwdriver

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Twisting

**Materials:** A wooden block with 6-8 crew holes, screws of correct size to fit the holes, small screwdriver, tray and a felt mat.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for concentration, coordination, |
|  |  | independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | To Learn how to use a screwdriver. |

**Preparation:** Previous twisting activities

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Unroll the felt mat on the table.
2. Place the block on the mat.
3. Select a screw and position it into the screw hole.
4. Pick up the screwdriver in the dominant hand and position screwdriver on the head of the screw.
5. Place subdominant thumb and index fingers on shaft of the screwdriver for control.
6. Slowly turn the screwdriver, repeating until the screw is securely in the screw hole.
7. Repeat for the remaining screws.
8. To unscrew: follow same procedure except screw in opposite direction to unloosen the screw from the screw holes

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Securing the shaft of the screwdriver,

slow, careful movements

Language: Non verbal at first; screwdriver, screw, shaft, handle.

**Points of Interest:** Doing “real work”, the screwdriver

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Screwing in opposite directions tightens or

loosens the screw.

**Control of Error:** Screws will not fir into the screw holes.

**Variations:** Vary the types of screwdrivers and screws.

**Extensions:** Woodworking

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute; May 2008

Stringing, Lacing and Sewing

### Name of Activity: Bead Stringing

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Lacing and Stringing

**Materials:** A Basket containing 5 ceramic beads and a cord.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | To learn to thread and string. |

**Preparation:** Putting pegs in holes, previous stringing activities.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

Stringing the Beads:

1. Pick up the cord near the knot with the dominant hand and lay it on the table. Straighten it by sliding other hand along the cord.
2. Notice the plastic tip and the knotted end.
3. Choose a bead from the basket and pick it up with the subdominant hand. Rotate the bead so the hole is pointing to the side.
4. Lift the end of the cord with the dominant hand about 1 inch below the plastic tip.
5. Look inside the bead at the hole.
6. Place plastic end of the cord through the bead hole.
7. Stop pushing when thumb and forefinger touch the bottom of the bead.
8. Transfer the grasp of the bead from the subdominant hand to the dominant hand.
9. Hold the bead with the dominant hand.
10. Grasp plastic tip of the cord with the subdominant.
11. Push bead along length of the cord to the knot.
12. Repeat with the remaining beads.

Removing the Beads: (hand references below require turning the string of beads)

1. Grasp the end knot with the subdominant hand.
2. Grasp the bead furthest from the end knot with the dominant hand.
3. Slowly slide the bead off the cord in a steady motion.
4. Carefully place the bead in the basket.
5. Repeat removing the remaining beads one at a time until all are removed.
6. Grasp knot with forefinger and thumb of subdominant hand.
7. Using dominant hand, loosely wind the cord around the remaining three fingers of the subdominant hand.
8. Place rolled cord on top of beads in the basket.
9. Return the basket to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Push and pull motion of threading the beads.

Wrapping the cord.

Language: Non verbal at first. Later: bead, cord, stringing.

**Points of Interest:** The beauty of the beads

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The knot is used to stop the beads.

**Control of Error:** Too many or too few beads to fill the cord.

**Variations:** Change the color of the beads and the cord.

**Extensions:** Sewing projects.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: Lacing a Card

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Lacing and Stringing

**Materials:** Tray containing a card with holes punched one inch apart and a lace knotted at one end. Lace is long enough to fill the card.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | To develop lacing techniques. |

**Preparation:** Stringing activities and previous lacing activities.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Draw attention to the holes in the card by pointing to them.
2. Pick up the lace with the dominant hand.
3. Grasp the knotted end of the lace with the subdominant hand.
4. Slide dominant hand along lace away from knotted end to straighten.

Stop just below the tip and continue holding lace end with dominant hand.

1. Release the knotted end with the subdominant hand and pick up the card.
2. Place plastic tip of lace through the hole from the underside of the card.
3. Pull lace through the hole until lace stops at the knotted end.
4. Push lace down through next hole from topside of card.
5. Continue around card, alternating from below and above card, until you complete the lacing.
6. Pause to notice work.

Removing the Lace:

1. Pull free the end of the lace from the top (or bottom) of the card through one hole.
2. Pull lace from opposite side of the card through the next hole.
3. Continue in this manner to end of the card until lace is completely removed from all holes.
4. Return the card to the tray.
5. Grasp the lace at knotted end with the sub dominant hand.
6. Using dominant hand, loosely wind the cord around the remaining three fingers of the subdominant hand and place on tray.
7. Return the tray to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Up and down motion of lacing.

Language: Nonverbal first presentation. Later: lacing.

**Points of Interest** Shape of the card and the lacing process.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The knot stops the lace from being pulled

through.

**Control of Error:** Length of the cord corresponds to the number of holes and size of the card.

**Variations:** Change the card shape and color; change the color of the lace.

**Extensions:** Lacing shoes, cross stitch, sewing.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

**Name of Activity: Stringing Beads on a Pipe Cleaner**

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Physical Skills: Lacing and Stringing

**Materials:** Tray containing a pipe cleaner and plastic bowls in a small bowl.

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for the development of concentration,

coordination, independence and order.

Indirect: To learn to string.

**Preparation:** Previous stringing activities.

**Age:** First Year

**Presentation of the Lesson:**

fingers

bowl.

1. Grasp the pipe cleaner with the sub dominant and straighten it with the of the dominant hand.
2. Notice the softness of the pipe cleaner.
3. Hold the pipe cleaner with the dominant hand near the end.
4. Grasp one bead from the bowl with the sub dominant hand.
5. Feed the pipe cleaner through the bead with the dominant hand.
6. Transfer the grasp of the bead from sub dominant to the dominant hand.
7. Push bead along pipe cleaner in a left to right motion.
8. Stop when the bead is approximately one inch from the right end of the pipe cleaner.
9. Thread the remaining beads onto the pipe cleaner.
10. Pause and admire the finished work.
11. Grasp the end of the pipe cleaner with the dominant hand.
12. Slowly pull beads off with the sub dominant hand and place them into the
13. Place the materials back onto the tray and return the materials to the shelf.

**Work of the Teacher:**

Points of Emphasis: Slow, precise stringing motion.

Language: Non verbal first presentation: Later: pipe cleaner,

beads.

**Points of Interest** Texture of the pipe cleaner and the beauty of the beads.

**Work of the Child:**

Points of Consciousness: Beads can be strung on various materials.

**Control of Error:** The number of beads to fill the pipe cleaner.

**Variations:** Change the color of the beads and the pipe cleaner.

**Extensions:** Pattern cards for the beads, art projects.

**Source:** Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

Gross Motor

# Walking on the Line

Walking on the Line is a collective group activity used for the development of movement and control of self. It is a good activity to be given early in the year, perhaps on the first day of school and should be repeated frequently, possibly every day.

The activity begins with the children walking naturally on the line. After several days the teacher introduces different ways to walk on the line. After the initial presentation of walking on the line, children can choose not to participate in the activity and this should be respected by the teacher. The best time for this activity may be at the end of the day after children have completed their work cycle.

The line itself should be elliptical in shape with a smaller line within the first for larger groups. The space available will have to be a major consideration. The line should be free of other furniture if possible, and if not, the furniture should be easily movable.

Walking on the Line is a purposeful activity designed to assist children in gaining control of their body, it should not be used as a means of punishment or control.

### Exercise #1: Walking Naturally

Model walking naturally on the line with arms at sides and eyes focused ahead, walk slowly but naturally.

Invite children to join you on the line.

### Exercise #2: Walking Heel to Toe

Model walking heel to toe to music.

### Exercise #3: Walking with a Flag

Walk heel to toe having each child hold a flag out in front with both hands.

### Exercise #4: Walking with a Flag in Each Hand

Walk heel to toe holding a flag in each hand, one raised to head level and the other at waist level.

### Exercises #5: Walking with Objects

Walk heel to toe, carrying objects such as a basket, a bell, a weight on the end of a string, a tray, a vase of flowers, a bell, etc.

### Exercise #6: Changing the Tempo of the Music

Change the tempo of the music inviting the children to march, skip and walk on tiptoe. The music should invite the style of movement.

**Source:** Martha Monahan, Northeast Montessori Institute; 2004, revised 2008

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### IX. Care of Self

### Name of Activity: The Button Frame

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Care of the Person

**Materials:** the Button Frame

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To develop concentration, coordination, |
|  |  | independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | To learn how to button and unbutton. |

**Preparation:** Previous activities involving the pincer grip.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Gently set the frame on the table with the right hand flap on top.
2. Point to each button one at a time moving top to bottom
3. Grasp fabric next to top button with pincer grasp of sub dominant hand and tug gently.
4. Using a pincer grip of the dominant hand, push button part way into the buttonhole.
5. Pause to “peek” that the button is coming through and then push the button completely through the hole.
6. Repeat these steps unbuttoning the remaining buttons.
7. Using pincer grips of both hands; pull back the right flap, then the left flap.
8. Say, “The buttons are unbuttoned.”
9. Using the index and middle fingers of the dominant hand, trace the inside of the frame in a counterclockwise motion beginning at the upper right hand corner.
10. Using pincer grip of both hands close the left flap and repeat, closing the right flap, aligning the buttonholes atop the buttons.
11. Starting at the bottom, lift the buttonhole flap with the dominant hand, exposing the reverse side.
12. Grasp button with the sub dominant hand with the thumb on top.
13. Tilt the button and slide it halfway through the buttonhole.
14. Release the flap with the dominant hand and grasp the edge of the button.
15. Draw the button through the hole with the right hand.
16. Give the button a slight tug and release it.
17. Continue procedure until all the buttons are in corresponding buttonholes and announce that all the buttons are “buttoned”.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Careful manipulation of buttons. Starting at

the top and proceeding down the frame and reversing direction when buttoning.

Language: Non verbal at first, later button, unbutton.

**Points of Interest:** Buttoning is “real” work. There is a hole for each button.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Buttoning is a way of closure.

**Control of Error:** If buttons are not buttoned correctly, the fabric will be crooked.

**Variations:** Work with frames with buttons of varying sizes.

**Extensions:** Buttoning own clothing, doll clothing.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute; May 2008

### Name of Activity: The Snap Frame

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Care of the Person

**Materials:** the Snap Frame

**Aims:** Direct: To develop concentration, coordination,

independence and order.

Indirect: To learn how to snap and unsnap.

**Preparation:** The button frame and previous activities to strengthen the fingers, such as bead stringing.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Place the frame gently on the table, prongs should be on the left and top flap on the right.
2. Comment on the snaps, and touch each one top to bottom.
3. Begin at the top of the frame and hold the material under the top snap with the two forefingers of your subdominant hand.
4. Use the thumb and forefinger of the right hand to pull apart the first snap.
5. Using the same movements, continue to unsnap teach snap, in progression down the frame.
6. Using the pincer grip of both hands, grasp the corners of the right flap, then the left flap to open the flaps to the sides.
7. Announce that all the snaps are “unsnapped”.
8. Using the index and middle fingers of the dominant hand, trace the inside of the frame in a counterclockwise motion beginning at the upper right hand corner.
9. Bring the left flap to the center of the frame, using pincer grip of both hands.
10. Bring the right flap with the sockets to the center and lay it over the first flap so the prongs are aligned directly under the sockets.
11. Starting at the bottom, lift the fabric with the dominant hand, exposing the prong and the socket.
12. Point to both parts (socket and prong).
13. Center the top part of the snap (socket) over the bottom part of the snap (prong) and use both index fingers to snap them together.
14. Pause and smile, drawing attention to the “snapping” sound.
15. Continue the same movements until all the corresponding snaps are snapped.
16. Announce that all the snaps are “snapped”

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Careful hand movements, starting at the top

of the frame and reversing directions when snapping.

Language: Non verbal at first, later snap, unsnap

**Points of Interest:** Snapping is “real work”, the “snapping” sound

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Snapping is a way of closure

**Control of Error:** Seeing fabric is crooked if incorrect matching of snap prong to socket.

**Variations:** Work with a different snapping frame.

**Extensions:** Snapping own clothing, doll clothing.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute; May 2008

### Name of Activity: The Zipper Frame

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Care of the Person

**Materials:** The Zipper Frame

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for the development of concentration,

coordination, independence and order.

Indirect: To learn how to zip and unzip

**Preparation:** Previous activities which have strengthened the fingers, such as bead stringing, the Button and Snap frames.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Place the zipper frame down gently on the table with the closed zipper at the top.
2. Using the index finger of your dominant hand, point to the top of the zipper and run your finger down the length of the zipper.
3. Pick up the zipper tab with a pincer grasp of fingers of the dominant hand.
4. Secure the opposite side of the top of the cloth with the sub dominant hand.
5. Placing thumb on top of zipper tab, smoothly slide the zipper with the dominant hand down the track until the zipper foot comes to the stopper.
6. The two flaps will now come apart.
7. Using the pincer grasp of both hands, grasp the corners of the tip and bottom of the left side of the flap and open it to the side.
8. Repeat with the right side f the flap.
9. Announce, “The zipper is unzipped.”
10. Using the index and middle fingers of the dominant hand, trace the inside of the frame in a counterclockwise motion beginning at the upper right hand corner.
11. Using the pincer grasp of both hands, bring the left flap to the center of the frame.
12. Repeat with the right flap, the zipper foot and zipper tab should now be side by side.
13. Point to both parts.
14. Place two fingers under and thumb on top of the handle, hold the bottom of the zipper with the sub dominant hand.
15. Grasping the zipper foot with dominant hand, thumb on top, feed the zipper foot into the sipper opening.
16. Emphasize pushing action until zipper is at a stopping point at bottom of zipper opening.
17. Hold the bottom of the material with the subdominant hand.
18. Grasp zipper handle with the dominant hand and smoothly slide zipper upward on track to the top.
19. Draw attention to the “zipping” sound.
20. Lay zipper handle down.
21. Announce, “The zipper is zipped and the frame is closed.”

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Careful handling and manipulation of zipper handle,

running the zipper smoothly up and down the track. Making sure the connection of the zipper foot into opening is made before zipping up.

Language: zipper, zip(ped), unzip(ped), handle

**Points of Interest:** Zipping is “real” work, sound that the zipper makes.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Zipping is a way of closure

**Control of Error:** Not being able to zip because the foot is not secured.

**Variations:** Work with different zipping frames

**Extensions:** Zipping clothing, doll clothing, lunchbox or backpack

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: The Hook and Eye Frame

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Care of the Person

**Materials:** The Hook and Eye Frame

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for concentration, coordination,

independence and order.

Indirect: To learn how to use a hook and eye and to care for oneself.

**Preparation:** Exercises to strengthen the fingers such a bead stringing, and sewing. The button, snap and zipper frames.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Place the hook and eye frame quietly on the table so that the hooks are on the right.
2. Lift up the top corner of the top flap with your dominant hand.
3. Secure the cloth near the top eyelet with your sub-dominant hand.
4. Emphasize looking at the hook and the eye.
5. With your right hand, gently pull the flap up and to the right, to release the hook from the eye.
6. Proceed down the frame, releasing each hook in this manner.
7. Using the pincer grip of both hands, grasp the corners of the top and bottom of the right side of the flap and open it.
8. Open the left side of the flap, using the same hand motions.
9. Announce, “the hooks are unhooked and the frame is open”.
10. Using the index and middle fingers of the dominant hand, trace the inside of the frame in a counterclockwise motion beginning at the upper right hand corner.
11. Bring the left flap (with the eyes) to the center and smooth it out.
12. Bring the right flap (with the hooks) to the center and lay it over the first flap so the eyes are aligned directly under the hooks.
13. Point to both parts.
14. Begin hooking from the bottom, moving upwards on the frame.
15. Using the dominant hand, slightly open the corner of the right flap to reveal the bottom hook.
16. Secure the fabric around the eyelet with your sub-dominant hand.
17. Guide the hook into the eyelet, giving a slight tug to show that the hook is secure.
18. Announce, “The hooks are hooked and the frame is closed.”

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Careful manipulation of the hooks in and out

of eyes, giving a slight tug to check security of hooks in eyes.

Language: hook, eye, hooked, unhooked, eyelet

**Points of Interest:** Hooking is real work, the challenge of manipulating the hooks and eyes.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: hooking is a way of closure

**Control of Error:** The frame does not lay flat because hooks and wyes are not aligned properly.

**Variations:** Work with a different type of hook and eye frame.

**Extensions:** Work with real clothing or a doll’s clothing.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: The Buckle Frame

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Care of the Person

**Materials:** the Buckle Frame

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for concentration, coordination,

independence and order.

Indirect: To learn how to buckle and to care for oneself.

**Preparation:** Exercises to strengthen the fingers such a bead stringing, and sewing.

The button, snap, zipper, and hook and eye frames.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Place the buckle frame quietly on the table so the buckle strap points to the left.
2. Hold the top buckle with the dominant hand.
3. Grasp the loose end of the strap near the buckle with your sub-dominant hand and push it through the left side of the holder completely.
4. Lay the strap down over the left side of the holder.
5. Repeat this step with remaining buckles.
6. Move back to the top buckle, grasp the end of the strap with your dominant hand and pull it back to the right to release the prong.
7. Repeat this step with remaining buckles.
8. Announce, “The buckles are unbuckled and the frame is open.”

9\*. Using the index and middle fingers of the dominant hand, trace the inside of the frame in a counterclockwise motion beginning at the upper right hand corner. \***(if material allows)**

1. Fold the left flap (with the prongs) to the center of the frame and smooth the fabric.
2. Fold the right flap (with the straps) to the center and lay it over the first flap so the prongs are under the straps.
3. Beginning with the bottom buckle, lift he strap with the dominant hand. Lift and steady the buckle with the forefingers of the sub dominant hand.
4. Feed the strap through the right side of the holder.
5. Repeat this step with each buckle moving up the frame.
6. Using the dominant hand, pull back the strap to reveal the holes. Point to the hole with the pointer finger of the subdominant hand.
7. Using the subdominant hand, feed the prong into the appropriate hole.
8. Repeat this step with each buckle, moving up the frame.
9. While grasping the left side of the holder with the sub-dominant hand, feed the end of the strap through it with your dominant hand.
10. Transfer grip and pull it through completely with your sub-dominant hand. Give a slight tug to show that the buckle is secure.
11. Announce, “The buckles are buckled and the frame is closed.”

### Work of the Teacher

Points of Emphasis: Clear, precise hand movements, handling of

the strap, prong, etc.

Language: buckle, strap, holder, prong, buckled, unbuckled

**Points of Interest:** Buckling is “real work”.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Buckling is a way of closure, noticing that an

item needs to be buckled.

**Control of Error:** Not being able to open the frame because some buckles are not completely unbuckled. Not seeing prong when buckle is closed.

**Variations:** Different types of buckle frames.

**Extensions:** Working with buckle’s on one’s clothing,

a doll’s clothing, shoes, backpacks and purses.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: The Lacing Frame

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Care of the Person

**Materials:** the Lacing Frame

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for concentration, coordination,

independence and order.

Indirect: To learn how to lace and to care for oneself.

**Preparation:** Exercises to strengthen the fingers such a bead stringing, and sewing.

The button, snap, zipper, hook and eye and buckle frames.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Place the lacing frame quietly on the table.
2. Using pincer grip of both hands, grasp the ends of the laces and pull them in opposite directions to untie the bow.
3. Start at the top of the frame. Secure left side of the cloth with the sub-dominant hand while unlacing left lace with dominant hand.
4. Pull out the lace completely and lay it flat to the side.
5. Unlace the right lace out of the top eyelet using same hand motions as done previously.
6. Continue unlacing, moving from side to side downward until the laces are unlaced.
7. Keep bottom set of eyelets laced.
8. Do not take the lace completely out of the frame, but open the frame with the bottom lace still in the frame.
9. Announce, “The laces are unlaced and the frame is open.”
10. Using the index and middle fingers of the dominant hand, trace the inside of the frame in a counterclockwise motion beginning at the upper right hand corner.
11. Bring the left side flap and then the right side to the center and smooth out the fabric.
12. Grasp the tip of the lace with pincer grip of the dominant hand, while holding up the appropriate hole on the left using the sub-dominant hand.
13. Feed the lace through the hole.
14. Transfer grip and pull the lace tip all the way through.
15. Place the lace in the opposite hole using the same hand movements as described.
16. Continue lacing up the frame ding one lace and then the other.
17. Each time the laces cross, point to the “x” that is made.
18. Upon reaching the top of the frame, tie a bow in the manner outlined in the Bow Tie frame.
19. Announce, “The laces are laced and the frame is closed.”

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: careful manipulation of the laces, drawing attention

to the “x” that is made when lacing, careful tying of bow to complete procedure

Language: lace, laced, unlaced, eyelet

**Points of Interest:** lacing is ‘real” work, moving from side to side, making an “x”, distinguishing between “laced” and “unlaced”

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Lacing is a way of closure, noticing that a

shoe needs lacing.

**Control of Error:** Noticing that an eyelet has been missed.

One lace ends up noticeably uneven with the others.

**Variations:** lacing a large or small shoe

**Extensions:** lacing and tying own shoes or a friend’s

**Source:** Northeast Montessori Institute 2008

### Name of Activity: Bow Tie Frame

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Care of the Person

**Materials:** the Bow Tie Frame

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for concentration, coordination,

independence and order.

Indirect: To learn how to tie and to care for oneself.

**Preparation:** Exercises to strengthen the fingers such a bead stringing, and sewing. The button, snap, zipper, hook and eye, buckling and lacing frames.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Place the bow tie frame quietly on the table with the red laced on the right.
2. Using pincer grip of both hands, grasp the ends of the laces and pull them horizontally in opposite directions to untie the bow.
3. Gently lay the loosened ends down on either side of the frame.
4. Repeat this step, working down the frame.
5. Go back to the top of the frame, .Place subdominant hand on frame beneath the first bow. Spread fingers to hold flaps stationary.
6. Slide index finger of dominant hand under knot and lift to loosen.
7. Using dominant hand, pick up the red lace and pull to release it from knot. Gently spread out the lace to the side of the frame.
8. Repeat with the white lace, laying it gently to the opposite side.
9. Repeat this step with the remaining bows, moving down the frame.
10. Gently open the flaps to the sides, using pincer grip of both hands.
11. Announce, “I have untied the bows.”
12. Using the index and middle fingers of the dominant hand, trace the inside of the frame in a counterclockwise motion beginning at the upper right hand corner.
13. Using pincer grip of both hands close the left flap and repeat, closing the right flap, aligning the red and white laces.
14. Begin at the bottom of the frame and make an X’s with the pair of laces, crossing the red lace to the left and the white lace to the right (on top of the white lace).
15. Take the red lace using the pincer grasp and wrap under white lace, extending out horizontally.
16. Grasp the ends of both laces and pull simultaneously, tightening the knot and extending ends of laces out to the sides.
17. Repeat with the other laces, moving up the frame.
18. Make a loop with white lace in the dominant hand and holding firm near the ‘X’.
19. With the sub-dominant hand, grasp the red lace near the bottom and wrap around the bottom of the white loop from back to front. Continue by making a small loop by tucking the red lace through its ‘wrapped’ section.
20. Grasp the ends of both loops with opposite hands using the pincer grasp and simultaneously pull outwards to tighten the bow.
21. Repeat making loops and bows continuing up the frame.
22. Announce, “I have (re)tied the bows!”

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Careful hand movements. Crossing of the laces and

making the ‘X’. Pulling the loops tight. Starting at the top and proceeding down the frame and reversing direction when tying.

Language: Non verbal at first, later untie, (re)tie.

**Points of Interest:** Tying is “real” work. The knot needs to be tight in order to hold.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Tying is a way of closure.

**Control of Error:** One-to-one correspondence of the laces. The bows stay tied.

**Variations:** Tying shoes, aprons (may wish to use long ties which wrap around and tie in front of child, rather than behind), shoes, clothes.

**Extensions:** Leaning other types of knots.

Source: Linda Seeley, Northeast Montessori Institute; Modified: July 2008

Additional Activities

Additional Activities

### Name of Activity: Packing a Suitcase

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Care of the Person

**Materials:** A suitcase with tow complete sets of underwear, two pairs of socks, two shirts, two pants, a pair of shoes (in a plastic bag), a pair of slippers and a robe.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | To learn how to pack a suitcase. |

**Preparation:** Previous folding activities or activities involving clasps and locks.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Open the suitcase, emphasizing the opening of the clasp
2. Carefully remove the clothes, one item at a time.
3. Shake the clothes to allow the folds to come out.
4. Continue with the above procedure, removing all of the clothes.
5. Choose the largest item which will be placed at the bottom of the suitcase.
6. Spread the item out and smooth out the wrinkles using palms of both hands.
7. Demonstrate how to fold the item so that it will lay flat and fit the size of the suitcase.
8. Continue to fold the clothes and place them in the suitcase.
9. Place the smaller items on the top of the suitcase (socks and underwear).
10. Place the shoes and slippers on top.
11. Close the suitcase and secure the clasp.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Opening and closing the clasp and folding the clothes.

Language: Non verbal at first, followed by suitcase, clasp, name of the articles of clothing.

**Points of Interest** Real life activity of packing a suitcase.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Clothing needs to be folded to fit the size

of the suitcase.

**Control of Error:** Suitcase will not close if clothes are not folded properly.

**Variations:** Different styles of suitcases and different clothing. Connect to Cultural Study Units and Geography.

**Extensions:** Packing other cases, such as a lunch box or a picnic basket.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute; May 2008

### Name of Activity: Hand Washing

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Care of the Person

**Materials:** a stand alone hand washing station with a basin, a cup, soap, sponge,

a towel and a basket for used towels (stored underneath) a small bucket for waste water.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | To learn how to wash and dry hands. |

**Preparation:** Scooping water, pouring and squeezing activities

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Put on an apron and roll up sleeves
2. Bring the cup to the water source and fill.
3. Pour water into the basin.
4. Repeat, filling a second cup of water and pouring into the basin.
5. Completely submerge hands in the basin of water.
6. If using a squirt soap, squirt I squirt of soap on hand.
7. Emphasize lathering both hands with soap.
8. Rinse completely in basin by scooping water and rubbing until all the soap has been rinsed off hands.
9. Gently shake hands above basin.
10. Towel-dry each finger and whole hand. Place cloth aside.
11. Carefully, pick up the basin and empty dirty water into bucket.
12. Replace basin and take bucket to sink to empty.
13. Use the dirty cloth to wipe out basin, cup, bucket and sink edge.
14. Place dirty cloth in the laundry and replace with a clean towel.
15. Remove apron and hang it up.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Lathering hands and rinsing thoroughly. Language: Non verbal at first. Later: lather, soap, rinse.

**Points of Interest:** The Sensorial experience of the water and bubbles from the soap.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Soap is used to clean hands.

**Control of Error:** Spilled water, hands are not clean.

**Variations:** Vary types of soaps and towels.

**Extensions:** Face washing, applying hand lotion after washing hands, nail buffing, nail brushing.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute; May 2008

### Name of Activity: Shoe Cleaning

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Care of the Person

**Materials**: Kit containing saddle soap, an apron, a mat with labeled areas, brush, cloth, dauber.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | Learn how to polish shoes. |

**Preparation:** Table scrubbing **Age:** First Year **Presentation of the Lesson:**

1. Put on an apron
2. Lay out the materials on labeled mat.
3. Place the shoe in the center of the mat and tuck the ties under the tongue.
4. Open the saddle soap container.
5. Put a small amount of water in lid of soap container.
6. Wet dauber and circle it one time around the soap.
7. Place sub dominant hand under tongue of shoe and lift the shoe up right.
8. Scrub in counterclockwise manner.
9. Return dauber to water, and shake out any excess.
10. Continue scrubbing the shoe.
11. Rinse the brush out in the water shake excess water and place dauber aside.
12. Use the cloth to wipe the shoe clean of soap.
13. Use the shoe brush to buff the shoe.
14. Put on shoe or return to owner.
15. Tidy up by wiping off the tools, the soap dish and the mat.
16. Close the saddle soap container.
17. Replace the cloth and place dirty cloth in the laundry.
18. Replace all the materials.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Discuss why only leather shoes are cleaned,

applying soap in circular motion and using a small amount of soap.

Language: Non verbal at first, later, saddle soap, dauber, buff, leather, brush, shine.

**Points of Interest:** Doing “real work”

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Shoes need cleaning, the more you buff the

shinier the shoe gets.

**Control of Error:** Clean, dry shoes.

**Variations:** Change soap container, mat and shoes.

**Extensions:** Polish shoes, use a shoe horn, use a buffing mitt, clean leather belts.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute; May 2008

# Suggested Activities for Care of the Person

* blowing one’s nose, sneezing etiquette
* washing one’s face in a mirror
* using a napkin
* tooth brushing
* bathroom hygiene
* hair brushing/accessorizing own or mannequin’s head, braiding
* putting coat on a hanger or hook
* putting coat on (flip over head method)
* dressing, including outdoor gear for all seasons:
  + dressing a doll for outside
  + basket with a set of snow gear to practice
  + snowsuit buddies, songs
* putting on an apron
* folding or rolling an apron
* putting on shoes
* packing and unpacking a lunch box
* packing or unpacking an overnight bag/suitcase
* cleaning sunglasses
* baby care: bathing, dressing, rocking, etc.
* hand or foot massaging

**X. Care of the Environment**

**Name of Activity: Floor Sweeping**

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Care of the Environment

**Materials:** Basket with pompoms, a broom, a hand brush, a dust pan and a taped off area on the floor.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | To learn how to sweep up messy floor space. |

**Preparation:** Previous sweeping activities.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Bring a small rug near the tapped off area of the floor.
2. Carry the materials to the taped off area.
3. Pour pompoms onto the floor near the tapped off area and set basket aside on the rug.
4. Emphasize placement of hands on the broom handle.
5. Sweep pompoms into the taped off area. Replace broom.
6. Hold dust pan with subdominant hand and set at edge of tapped off area.
7. Using the dominant hand, sweep pompoms into the dustpan with the hand brush.
8. One by one place pompoms back into the basket.
9. Return the basket to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Sweeping motion, hand placement on the

broom handle.

Language: Non verbal first presentation. Later: sweeping, dustpan, pompoms.

**Points of Interest:** Sweeping into taped area, the sound of the broom sweeping.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Awareness that an area needs sweeping.

**Control of Error:** Pompoms outside of taped area.

**Variations:** Change the color of the pompoms, use Other objects to sweep.

**Extensions:** Real life activities of sweeping, raking leaves.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

### Name of Activity: Cleaning the Leaves of a Plant

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Care of the Environment

**Materials:** a tray with a small dish, two small baskets, an eye dropper bottle full of water, a small sponge.

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for the development of concentration,

coordination, independence and order.

Indirect: To learn how to care for plants and wash the leaves.

**Preparation:** Any previous activities involving plant care and previous squeezing activities.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Bring the work to the work space and set down gently.
2. Pick up one of the baskets and walk over to the supply shelf.
3. Count out three (3) cotton balls into the basket and return to work place.
4. Remove the eye dropper bottle.
5. Secure the bottle with the dominant hand and unscrew the cap with the dominant fingers.
6. Remove the eye dropper and squeeze water into the small dish.
7. Replace the eyedropper and secure the cap.
8. Select a plant from the classroom environment and bring to the work place.
9. Pick up a cotton ball with the dominant fingers and gently dip into the bowl of water.
10. Place the sub dominant hand under the leaf of the plant.
11. Rub the leaf gently with a circular motion, removing the dirt.
12. Place the used cotton ball in the second basket.
13. Inspect the leaf to see if it is clean.
14. Repeat the procedure on the same leaf if is still dirty. If it is clean select another leaf and repeat the procedure.
15. Pause to admire the clean leaf.
16. Pick up the basket of used cotton balls and carry to the trash bin. Dispose the used cotton balls.
17. Wipe the water dish and wipe up any spills.
18. Return the work to the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Handling the leaves gently and with care.

Amount of water in the dish.

Language: Nonverbal at first, later, plant, leaves, cotton ball, eye dropper.

**Points of Interest:** The beauty of the leaves when cleaned.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Leaves get dirty and need to be washed.

**Control of Error:** The leaves are clean.

**Variations:** Vary the types of plants.

**Extensions:** Using a mister and gardening activities.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute; May 2008

### Name of Activity: Table Scrubbing

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Care of the Environment

**Materials:** A set up that includes an apron, a bucket, a cup, a cloth, a brush, soap and a sponge. It is helpful to have a mat with outlines of proper placement of all materials.

**Aims:** Direct: To provide for the development of concentration,

coordination, independence and order. Indirect: Develop the skill to clean a dirty table.

**Preparation:** Pouring activities, carrying water, putting on an apron, previous polishing and dusting work.

**Age:** First Year

**Presentation of the Lesson:** (Present this lesson to a small group of children; 3-4.)

1. Introduce activity and layout mat near table to be scrubbed.
2. Lay out materials on mat and put on the apron.
3. Bring the bucket and the cup to the sink.
4. Pour 2 cups of water into the bucket.
5. Return to the work area and set down bucket and cup on mat.
6. Put brush into the bucket to wet it.
7. Shake excess water off of the brush into the bucket.
8. Wipe the brush across the soap several times.
9. Move brush to the top left corner of the table and begin scrubbing in a counter-clockwise motion.
10. Continue to scrub the entire table.
11. Rinse the brush in the bucket of water.
12. Shake the excess water off the brush and return brush to mat.
13. Dip the sponge into the water and squeeze out excess water over the bucket.
14. Place the sponge in the top left corner and using a downward stroke, wipe off the soapy suds. Cleaning the sponge as needed. (Continue in downward strokes from left to right.)
15. Open the cloth and using two hands wipe the table dry.
16. Feel the table to check if it is dry.
17. Wipe the edges of the table with the cloth.
18. Empty the bucket of dirty water.
19. Wipe out the bucket, the cup and the soap dish with the cloth.
20. Wipe the mat dry.
21. Place the cloth in the hamper and replace with a dry cloth.
22. Place work back on the shelf.
23. Remove and replace the apron.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Modeling careful steps and procedures such

as shaking out the brush, scrubbing in a counterclockwise motion, sweeping the brush across the soap.

Language: Non verbal at first: scrub, table, brush, stains, suds, soap dish.

**Points of Interest:** Working with water, the rhythm of scrubbing in a counter clockwise motion.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Awareness that a table needs cleaning. This

is “real” work”.

**Control of Error:** Spilled water, table is still dirty or wet.

**Variations:** Changes brushes used for scrubbing.

**Extensions:** Furniture and floor scrubbing and polishing. Source: Northeast Montessori Institute, 2008

**Name of Activity: General Polishing**

**Area:**  General: Practical Life  
 Specific: Care of the Environment: Polishing

**Materials:**  Apron, Object to be polished, tray containing polishing consumables (polishing cloth, buffing mit, polishing compound, polishing mat, cotton buds).

**Aims:**  Direct: To provide for the development of concentration, coordination   
 independence and order  
 Indirect: To learn how to polish and beautify ones environment

**Preparation:** Previous activities that include stirring, twisting

**Age:** First Year

**Presentation of the Lesson:**

1. Put on an apron and collect the consumable materials needed to complete the exercise.

2. Select an object from the classroom to be polished and bring it to the workspace

3. Carefully remove the napkin ring and unroll the polishing mat to create your work space.

4. Starting in the upper left corner, lay out the items used for polishing along the top edge of the mat in the order they will be used.

5. Place the item to be polished on the mat, directly in front of you.

6. Open the container of polishing compound and apply it to the polishing cloth.

7. Begin polishing in a circular, counter-clockwise motion.

8. Once the polish has been applied, return the cloth to the tray and collect the buffing mit.

9. Begin buffing the item with the buffing mit in the same circular, counter clockwise motion. Pause to admire the sheen of the polished object.

10. Once the item has been polished and buffed, return it back to where it was found.

11. Discard all consumable items into the garbage.

12. Return polishing tray with compound back to the shelf.

**Work of the Teacher:**

Points of Emphasis: Laying out the items in sequence they will be used. Admiring the beauty of the polished object.

Language: Buffing, sheen, mit,

**Points of Interest:** The beauty of a polished object.

**Work of the Child:**

Points of Consciousness: Objects require maintenance

**Control of Error:**  The item is not shiny

**Variations:** Polishing an apple, mirror, wood, glass, brass

**Extensions:**

Source: Karen Simon, 2016

Adapted by: Natasha McKenzie, 2016

NATURAL CLEANERS AND POLISHING COMPOUNDS

Window & Glass Cleaner

1 gallon water

1 cup white vinegar

Apply with cloth or spray bottle; dry with clean cloth.

(For heavily soiled windows, add 2 tablespoons corn starch to mixture; mix well)

Polishing compounds:

Scouring Powder Copper cleaner

1/4 cup baking soda Rub with vinegar and salt.

1/4 cup borax 1 1/2 cups hot water

Silver polish Furniture Polish

2 tablespoons baking soda 3 tablespoons lemon juice

1 tablespoon salt 1 quart vegetable or mineral oil

Small piece of aluminum foil Combine lemon juice with vegetable or mineral oil; Mix above ingredients; soak silver for 1 hour; wash normally. wipe on with a cloth; remove with a clean cloth.

Wood Furniture/Floor Polish Mildew Remover

1/2 cup white vinegar 1 cup hydrogen peroxide

1/2 cup vegetable or mineral oil Spray bottle

1 Tablespoon lemon juice Lemon juice

Mix well; rub on surface; buff with clean, dry cloth. Borax

scrub with a thin paste of lemon juice and Spray mildew with hydrogen peroxide; borax to inhibit a new mildew formation.

House and Garden Natural Insecticide

2 tablespoons liquid soap

1 quart water

Spray bottle

Mix soap and water; add to spray bottle; 2 tablespoons liquid soap spray plants evenly, aiming directly at pests whenever possible. 1 quart water

All-Purpose Insecticide

1 bulb of garlic

1 small onion

1 tablespoon cayenne (red) pepper

Spray bottle Finely chop onion and garlic; mix with tap water; add cayenne pepper; let sit for one hour, then add soap. Mix well. When foam subsides, strain into spray bottle. Keep refrigerated. Good for 1-2 weeks.

Special Pest Treatments

Ants

Use boric acid, talcum powder, or chalk as a barrier along the line of entry.

Snails and Slugs

Fill a shallow pan with flat beer and place in the infested area.

Roaches

Set out a dish containing equal parts sugar and baking soda. Roaches are attracted to sugar, and baking soda is deadly to them.

Fleas

Orange peels

Grapefruit peels

3 cloves garlic

1 tablespoon rosemary, (optional)

1 pint water

Combine ingredients in blender; blend until liquified. Heat mixture on low heat for 15 minutes. Strain liquid into spray bottle. Spray on pet, and massage thoroughly into your pet's coat, avoiding their eyes.

# Suggestions for Care of the Environment Activities

### Indoor Activities Outdoor Activities

sweeping raking

mopping gardening

crumbing planting

wiping a placemat weeding

washing dishes watering

folding classroom cloths harvesting

carpet sweeping mulching

sweeping other areas planting flower bulbs

cubby cleaning cutting back dead flower(s)

sharpening pencils shoveling snow

prepare for a storm filling bird feeders

animal care making bird food

recycling outdoor sweeping

cleaning a fish tank collecting rain water

shoe polishing tidy up the playground

blackboard cleaning bicycle scrubbing

washing windows, mirrors caring for outdoor animals scrubbing tables, chairs

dusting

dusting puzzle maps dusting bead chains washing shelves

Source: Brainstorming Session of Northeast Montessori Institute Students

XI. Nutrition and Food Preparation

# Food Preparation

Food preparation/nutrition/cooking is most effectively approached as part of an extension of the Practical Life curriculum and thus follows the same guidelines for preparation, set-up and sequencing. The aims, both direct (developmental) and indirect (practical), are in accord with those we strive to give the children with the basic Practical Life activities. Through use of food preparation exercises, we can introduce the value of good nutrition, help the child gain control of his environment, increase their basic life skills and as always; “help me to do it myself”.

1. Parts of Practical Life Curriculum
   1. Aims
      1. Direct

a.) concentration, coordination, independence, order and confidence

b.) appreciation for the value of food and nutrition

* + 1. Indirect

a.) mastery of particular skills involved (in isolation and in combination)

b.) opportunity for the child to have meaningful experience involving food

* 1. Preparation
     1. Use of basic Practical Life exercises a.) perfection of skills in isolation

b.) use of these skills in combination

* + 1. Sequential ordering of food preparation activities ll. Practical Application of Food Preparation in the Classroom

1. Part of Practical Life

1.) can be integrated into general sequence 2.) can be a separate sequence

3.) can be a part of individual snack

1. Basis for Sequencing 1.) by food groups

2.) by seasons/availability of food 3.) random selection of activities 4.) tied to cultural studies

1. Orientation to Class

1.) Individual Activity

a.) same guidelines as other Practical Life work b.) application of ground rules

2.) Group Activity

a.) tasting/experiencing different foods b.) preparing food as a group

c.) group contribution

d.) creating new dishes/recipes

1. Using Food in Parallel Activities

1.) scooping, tonging beans, nuts, etc.

2.) rolling a lemon to soften it before squeezing 3.) sorting (nuts, beans, fruit, vegetables, etc.)

4.) polishing (an apple, lemon/salt for polishing copper) 5.) sorting silverware

6.) table setting

7.) flower arranging for a centerpiece 8.) planting

lll. Linking Food Preparation to Other Areas

A. Art

1.) vegetable stamping

2.) macaroni collages and necklaces 3.) decorating a food

4.) making place cards and place mats

lV. Nutrition

1. Introduction to Basic Food Groups 1.) protein

2.) fruit and vegetables

3.) milk and dairy products 4.) grain (breads and cereals)

1. Nutrition we get from Foods 1.) vitamins

2.) minerals

1. Use of Natural Ingredients

1.) difference between unrefined and refined ingredients 2.) how to encourage children to prefer nutritious food

# Food for Thought

### Learning through Food: An Integrated Curriculum

1. Everyday Living: motor skills, practical application of the hand and tools,

food preparation, cooking, grace and courtesy

1. Sensorial: sensorial exploration and knowledge, experience and

naming (look at the size, color and shape, touch the surface, the texture, feel the weight, the temperature, the form), listen, smell, taste and delight.

1. Language: Always use correct vocabulary (simple, brief and precise).

Offer the names of the food, the utensils, the actions involved in the process, the end product. Match picture cards and names of fruit, etc. Food lotto.

Riddles: What am I? Songs, poems and books. Reading and writing recipes.

1. Math: An awareness of and experience with amounts: money: how much does it cost? weight: how much does it weigh? volume: how to measure ingredients

temperature: setting the over, thermometer time: using a timer

1. Science: Nutrition: food contains nutrients that we need to live,

grow and be healthy and happy. What are nutrients? What foods do we find them in? How does our body use these nutrients? What should we eat?

The Four Food Groups

Botany: Eating leaves, roots, stems, flowers, seeds, bark. What do plants need to eat and drink?

Gardening: growing foods from seeds.

1. Geography/ Culture: Different lands, foods, cultures, customs.

United thread: we all need food, and water. An awareness of world hunger.

The importance of sharing resources. The role of food throughout history.

1. Art: Body mapping, self portraits, collages with seeds, nuts grains. Printing with fruit to make napkins, tablecloths, etc. Art appreciation.
2. Music: Environmental sounds, gourds, seed pods, etc.
3. Field Trips: A farm, a farmers market, a grocery visit, a bakery,

a cheese shop, maple syruping, apple harvest, dairy farm, fish hatchery, etc.

1. Social Gathering: Invite friends, parents to lunch; go on a picnic,

share birthdays and holiday celebrations.

Source: Linda Seeley; Northeast Montessori Institute, Revised 2001/2007

# Discussion of Food Preparation Skills

These are the skills which a child should have in order to start any type of basic food preparation. Hand transfer is the most basic skill for the use and integration of the hand, arm and shoulder muscles. Scooping is an extension of hand transfer using a tool and is a pre requisite to measuring.

Dipping involves the use of the hand to dip one food into another. Some ideas are dipping banana into wheat germ or granola, dipping fresh vegetables into cottage cheese, or dipping corn chips into guacamole.

Tearing and Snapping: Techniques for changing the shape of food without the

use of tools. Many fresh foods can be used to practice tearing and snapping such as; green beans, cauliflower, lettuce, peas, etc.

Mixing: The process of evenly distributing ingredients without

the use of tools. Hand mixing and kneading are integration of arms, shoulder, wrists and hand muscles. This work is soothing for both adults and children.

Spooning: Spooning is a refinement of scooping. Tonging, hand shelling and tweezing are all part of the same prehensile motion of the fingers. Stirring and shaking are both ways of mixing two or more ingredients together, although the motions are very different.

Sifting: This involves separating large from fine particles. It can also involve mixing of ingredients together. Sifting uses either fairly gross arm motions or fairly refined hand motions, depending on the type of sifter.

Spreading: This is popular with children and can be used extensively in snack preparations such as; peanut butter, jelly, honey, cream cheese, butter, etc. These spreads can be put on crackers, bread, muffins, celery, etc.

Basting: Involves the use of the hands and fingers in a squeezing type motion. It is more of a practice skill, since school cooking budgets do not usually cover turkeys and roasts.

Hand Rolling: This uses both hands to make a ball or sausage out of some

doughy type material. Ball cookies or meatballs are foods utilizing this skill; play dough is good for practice.

Juicing: This motion requires one hand to hold the juicer while the other hand is pressing and rotating from the elbow. A wet cloth placed under the juicer will prevent slipping. Fruit yields more juice if it is first rolled on the table firmly with hands.

Hand Peeling: This develops manual dexterity and can be used with shucking corn and picking off the silk, also peeling bananas, cooked potatoes or boiled eggs.

\* Children love to crack eggs as well as peel the shell

### Important Notes:

Cutting with a table knife is the first form of knife use. The child should have a cutting board and the first food should be flat such as; soft cheese, biscuit dough, or bread.

Grinding changes the shape of food using an instrument. Hand grinding Indian style is a good start. Herbs, roots, nuts and even corn can be ground in this way. Coffee can be ground in a hand grinder.

An egg beater is quite complicated to use and may be practiced in a pail of water first.

Again, a wet cloth is good to put under the bowl to prevent slipping.

To demonstrate the vegetable peeler, you should show hoe to hold the handle and not the blade and point out its sharpness. Demonstrate with a carrot the technique of holding underneath and peeling downwards, letting the child see the curl of the peel as it is taken off. Carrots are a good beginning food for peeling. Cucumbers provide a control of error as you can see where you have missed. Potatoes and apples are harder because of their roundness.

Grating is quite difficult since people’s fingers grate too! Show the children the knife sharp prongs. At first, do not let the child grate down too far on the cheese or vegetables. The square metal upright grater is easier for children to use. cheese is a good starting point, as well as cold cooked potatoes for hash browns, apples, carrots and cabbage.

There needs to be a very good demonstration for sharp knives. emphasis must be made about which edge is the cutting edge. Some teachers put masking tape on the side the child can touch. Show child how to carry a knife properly (grapefruit knives may be blunt tipped, but may be double sided, so are to be avoided).

Be sure there is one adult supervising every child using a knife. It is the responsibility of the adult to decide whether the child is mature enough to understand the care and safety involved in handling sharp knives.

Source: Linda Seeley; Northeast Montessori Institute, Revised 2001

# Suggestions for Snack / Food Preparation

### Skill Activity with Hand Food

Tearing lettuce, cabbage, spinach (used in combination with other vegetables to make a salad)

Snapping beans, broccoli, cauliflower (served alone or with dip)

Dipping pre-cut vegetables, fruit, bread sticks, pretzels

Cracking eggs (boiled and sliced)

Shelling peas

Peeling banana, orange, tangerine, grapefruit, egg

Picking grapes from a bunch

Sectioning orange, grapefruit, tangerine Juicing (squeezing) pre-cut orange, lemon, lime

Rolling dates in coconut, bananas in honey and crushed nuts

### Skill Activity with Tool Food

Washing vegetables with a brush

Rinsing lettuce in colander or spinner, sprouts in sieve

Peeling carrots, cucumbers (for dipping), potatoes

Grating carrots, cabbage, cheese, nutmeg, cinnamon, coconut

Coring apples, pears

Pitting peaches, cherries, dates, olives

Scooping cantaloupe, watermelon (with melon-baller) pumpkins

Stirring/Mixing salads, trail mix

Shaking spices, herbs, cream (to make butter)

Sifting dry ingredients

Straining fruit, vegetable juice

Beating eggs

Source: Linda Seeley; Northeast Montessori Institute, revised 2001

# Mother’s Day Tea

1. Invitation
   1. Establish a date and send invitations 2-3 weeks ahead of time to give working mothers an opportunity to make arrangements. Send a note to parents explaining the tea (how it will be done completely by the children and the importance of their being there. Also mention no siblings should attend). This is a very special time for the child and mother.
   2. Have children make the cover for the invitation and decorate with a drawing or design. The inside wording can be copied by older children and traced by younger children.

ll. Card

A. A photo of child preparing for the tea is nice or simply a child’s drawing. The child can write own message or dictate one to the teacher.

lll. Refreshments

1. Decide on food to be prepared. About 5 different items makes a nice assortment. (cookies, muffins, fruit bread, cucumber sandwiches, pineapple and strawberries for garnish).
2. Have children divided into groups to cook. We ask them to bring ingredients from home. They make a note saying. “I am going to make

. I need to bring in on . Thank you. Prepare one item a day with small cooking groups.

1. Some items can be prepared and then frozen until the tea. lV. Gift

A. Select a gift to be made by the children. Items such as potpourri, sachet, bookmarks, dried or silk flower arrangements, a plant that a child has started, bubble bath made with colored Epsom salts, plaster of paris hand print, pot holder, are all very popular gifts and can be made ahead of time.

1. Mother’s Day book
   1. This is composed of children’s interviews and recipes. This could also be considered the gift.
   2. Interview: Can you tell me what your Mommy looks like? Does she work? What does she do? What does she like to do at home...what doesn’t she like to do? What do you like to do best with your Mom? Why do we have Mommies?
   3. The interviews are handwritten or typed along with recipes. Each child designs a cover for the booklet.

Vl. Tea Practice

1. Set a table with a place setting for the child and one for the mother. Use real china teacups, glass, plates, napkins, menu, vases of flowers.
2. Role play greeting, seating, chatting, taking order, carrying teacup, serving refreshments.
3. Leave set-up so children can practice on their own.

Vll. Day before the Tea

1. Prepare the classroom, set the tables, arrange the flowers, etc.
2. Practice again with classroom set-up for tea. Have clear traffic patterns.

Vlll. Day of the Tea

1. Arrange refreshments on plates or baskets, slice strawberries, etc.
2. Have children sitting in places ready to greet parents.
3. Take time with them to appreciate all they have done and go over how the tea will run once more.
4. Children bring their mother’s teacup with the order to the teacher. The teacher serves hot beverages; children serve the refreshments.
5. At the end of the tea have children help with clean up.

This is a wonderful experience for the children, parents and teachers. It is a culmination of so many of their skills. It becomes one of the most popular events of the year, truly worth all the time and effort.

Source: Linda Seeley; Northeast Montessori Institute, Revised 2001

### Name of Activity: Spreading Butter on a Slice of Bread

**Area:** General: Practical Life

Specific: Nutrition and Food Preparation

**Materials:** Slices of bread, butter knife, napkins, tray, ‘reserved’ card, small butter dish with butter, a small cutting board, small cloth or sponge.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To develop concentration, coordination, independence, |
|  |  | sense of order, self confidence and the appreciation of the |
|  |  | value of good food and nutrition. |
|  | Indirect: | To master the skill of spreading and having a meaningful |
|  |  | experience of food. |

**Preparation:** Previous Practical Life activities

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

* 1. Bring the work to a table and place the reserved card in front of the work
  2. Go wash hands
  3. Remove the articles from the tray and arrange logically on the table.
  4. Pick up a slice of bread and lay it on the cutting board.
  5. Pick up the butter knife with the dominant hand and scrap knife lightly across the butter so there is some on the knife.
  6. Use subdominant thumb, index and middle fingers to secure the slice of bread.
  7. Gently spread the butter onto the bread.
  8. Replace knife on the tray.
  9. Remove a napkin from the tray and place the buttered bread on it.
  10. Clean up work area for the next child by crumbing the cutting board and table area and wiping the knife clean.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Scraping the butter knife over the butter and the

spreading motion. Securing the bread before spreading.

Language: Non verbal at first, later, cutting board, knife, butter, spread.

**Points of Interest:** The kind of bread, the color and design of the napkins, eating the bread!

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The knife is used to spread

**Control of Error:** Child’s own movements, spreading the butter and having the bread rip.

**Variations:** Changing the type of bread and the spread (bagel and cream cheese) .

**Extensions:** Making breakfast at home

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute; May 2008

### Name of Activity: Cinnamon Grating

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Food Preparation

**Materials:** Several sticks of cinnamon in a basket, a grater, a bowl on a tray, a small brush and a wide mouthed jar.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | To learn how to safely grate cinnamon from a stick. |

**Preparation:** Any previous grating activity

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Put on a apron and wash hands
2. Look at the materials on the tray; remove the bowl and place in the center of the work place.
3. Pick up the grater and place into the bowl. Secure with your subdominant hand.
4. Pick up a stick of cinnamon and draw across the grater in a top to bottom motion, pressing firmly .
5. Take great care to keep fingers away from the blades of the grater.
6. Repeat procedure until powder accumulates in the bowl.
7. Notice the cinnamon powder in the bowl and draw attention to the scent of the cinnamon.
8. Open the jar and place the lid to the side.
9. Pick up the bowl with the subdominant hand and the brush in the dominant hand.
10. Move bowl above the jar and slowly brush the cinnamon into the jar.
11. Place down the bowl and the brush.
12. Secure the lid on the jar and place on the tray.
13. Use the brush to clean the grater.
14. Use a crumbing brush to clean off the table of any cinnamon powder.
15. Return the materials to the tray and replace n the shelf.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Grating motion, keeping fingers away from

the grater.

Language: Non verbal at first, later cinnamon, spice, grater, powder, etc.

**Points of Interest** The fragrance of the cinnamon, the power formed from grating the stick.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Cinnamon power comes from a cinnamon stick,

cinnamon comes from bark.

**Control of Error:** Grater is proper size for the child.

**Variations:** Grating nutmeg, cheese, soap.

**Extensions:** Cooking activities involving cinnamon such as making cinnamon toast or cinnamon applesauce.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute; May 2008

### Name of Activity: Cutting Carrots

**Area:** General: Practical Life Specific: Food Preparation

**Materials:** Tray containing a small cutting board, a brush for cleaning vegetables,

a small knife, a vegetable peeler, a mat for the table, a serving dish, a dish large enough to scrub the carrot, a small pitcher, a sponge or wiping cloth, an apron and a small pail for refuse.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aims:** | Direct: | To provide for the development of concentration, |
|  |  | coordination, independence and order. |
|  | Indirect: | To learn how to peel and cut a vegetable. |

**Preparation:** Previous cutting and peeling activities.

**Age:** First Year

### Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Put on an apron and wash hands
2. Remove the mat from the tray and spread out on the table
3. Arrange the items from the tray onto the mat in a logical order
4. Bring the pitcher to the sink and fill with water
5. Pour the water into the larger dish and place the carrot into the dish.
6. Pick up the scrub brush and brush the carrot on all sides, rotating the carrot and rinsing the brush as needed.
7. Place the carrot on the cutting board and cut off both ends
8. Dispose the ends in the refuse pail
9. Hold the carrot in your sub dominant hand and the peeler in your dominant hand.
10. Peel from the top to the bottom of the carrot moving the peeler away from the body.
11. Place the pile of peelings in the refuse pail
12. Lay the carrot on the cutting board and press the knife firmly downward through the carrot, making thin slices.
13. As you cut each slice, place the knife down and place the sliced piece on the serving dish.
14. Empty the water from the scrubbing dish into the sink
15. Wipe dry the bowls, knife, peeler and mat
16. Replace all items on the tray and return to the shelf
17. Hang up the apron
18. Serve friends the carrot slices or place the dish on the snack table.

### Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Careful handling of the peeler and the knife,

peeling from the top to the bottom of the carrot.

Language: Nonverbal presentation. Later: knife, peeler, vegetable, slice.

**Points of Interest:** This is “real” work: watching the peel curl as it comes off the carrot: seeing if you can peel the whole length of the carrot; offering carrot slices to classmates, taste of the carrot.

### Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Carrots need scrubbing before serving, the knife slices the carrot.

**Control of Error:** Seeing that the sharp side of the knife is toward the carrot.

**Variations:** Peeling apples or potatoes, cutting bananas, celery or cucumbers.

**Extensions:** Extending cutting exercises to dicing, chopping, mincing and coring. Cooking and baking activities associated to the foods being prepared.

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute; May 2008

# 

# XII. The Montessori Teacher

# Qualities for the Teacher to Develop

### Written by Carrie Elizabeth Smith

1. Open mindedness: Be aware of any closed doors or blind spots. All of us

have them so it is our job to notice them and then to open the door to the new possibilities. Be particularly sensitive to personal, ethnic, racial or cultural bias.

1. Curiosity: Einstein referred to this as “Oh holy curiosity!” The avenues for exploration are endless. Be willing to not know, be willing to always learn something

new. The children will teach us every day. Curiosity helps keep us interested in living.

1. Experimentation: Try new things, do familiar things in different ways.

Always be open to new discoveries. See how

many ways a task can be accomplished. Experimenting creates new passageways in the brain.

1. Encouragement: Means to literally bring your heart into the work and

to speak to the heart of others. Couer is French for heart. Words and gestures of encouragement can often make the difference between giving up or going on. Have Courage!

1. Patience: Remember that there is enough time for what is important.

We live in a “hurry up” culture and so, in our rush, we too often miss what has heart and meaning.

1. Faith: We all must believe in the beauty, the dignity, the meaningfulness of life and all living beings. We must learn to see the sacred, the precious, in all things. We do not have to always know or understand but we do have to hold on to our faith.
2. Acceptance: Come to see the beauty or the ugliness of what is in front of

us and accept it. We are learning to take in all the aspects, all the sides so that we can come to know the truth

1. Trust: One of the primary tasks of the teacher is to create an environment of safety and trust. It is only in such an environment that the real process of education can occur. Trust ourselves and the children.
2. Enthusiasm: Bring our love, our passion, our amazement, our

energy to the classroom. It is contagious!

1. Respect: One of the greatest gifts that we offer children is our respect. Also, we give them many opportunities to create self respect and to express their respect for others. This is an essential ingredient for peaceful relations.
2. Dedication: Speaks to the way in which we honor our profession. To

dedicate means to “devote to a sacred purpose”. This attitude will give great meaning to our work in the classroom.

1. Honesty: The ability to look at ourselves and others and speak the truth about whatever is going on. This particularly

addresses anytime that we might need additional help and support. Be honest.

1. Love: As Maria Montessori says (in Quoting the Saints) “*All is nothing unless there be love. Love for ourselves, others and all living things.*”
2. Compassion: The ability to see through another’s eyes. We are far less

likely to judge another harshly when we know what it feels like to stand in their shoes.

*This is a starting point. Add any other qualities that are important to you.*

*Developing these qualities is a life long practice.*

*One more to add...JOY!*

*The joy we give and receive will feed us for a lifetime.*

Original Source: Carrie Elizabeth Smith; Northeast Montessori Institute, 1993

# Characteristics of a Good Teacher

1. Personal Attitudes
   1. a well adjusted person who offers the child a calm, consistent, personal relationship. Takes time to BE.
   2. be able to feel what the child says
   3. have a positive regard for one’s self

dress: approachable yet professional

smell: good

jewelry: not too much

hair: not in the way

* 1. be open and flexible
  2. have a love and enthusiasm for life
  3. be trustworthy (children recognize insincerity)
  4. have an inner freedom
  5. warm personality and accepting attitude
  6. sense of humor

1. General Guidelines
   1. experimenter
   2. know the materials; work with them, practice presentations
   3. know the child and his/her needs
   4. be a guide.........a patient observer
   5. able to interpret the cues which the child is giving you (observation)
   6. be able to communicate to the children, staff, parents, etc. 7, able to set up an effective environment
2. know when to move in and when to withdraw
3. able to become involved with a child yet be aware of the total group
4. able to appreciate and appeal to the “spirit of the child”
5. The Teacher must be a Certified Professional
   1. responsible to job, parents, children, classroom, colleagues, etc.
   2. respect the privacy (observations, conferences, staff discussions)
   3. learn to distinguish between personal attitudes and objective observations in our application of data
   4. share your skills and knowledge

## Be the respecter and protector of the child…

*…help the child to discover (don’t give all the*

*answers)*

*…allow the child the freedom to make choices move at his or her own speed*

*“We can only teach from our own being, we have no where else to teach from.”*

*“Who we are as persons precedes and dominates and drives who we are as teachers.”*

A yoga teacher said: “I think teaching is the most important

thing in life. The subject doesn’t matter, because it is not what you do that is important, but what you awaken in the other person.”

Source: Northeast Montessori, 2000

***Evaluation Check on Myself***

* *Did I smile?*
* *Was I enthusiastic?*
* *Did I use my calm, soft, but firm voice when speaking to the children or parents?*
* *Did I respond intellectually (the higher way) or emotionally to a difficult situation?*
* *Did I enjoy my work today?*
* *Did I talk too much or did I just show the child?*
* *Did I give the child two equally good choices or did he have to respond to my wish?*
* *Was I prepared?*
* *Did I move about the room slowly enough?*
* *Did I challenge the children with a new lesson?*
* *Did I stand back and observe?*
* *Did I listen?*
* *Was everything in the environment in order?*
* *Did I encourage another child to be a teacher?*
* *Was I too serious and overly concerned?*
* *Did I criticize or scold in front of another child?*
* *Was I the example of love and understanding?*

*Original Source: The National Montessori Reporter*