

# MONTESSORI AT HOME



When your child attends a Montessori program it is wonderful if your home environment can support the classroom and reflect Montessori principles. A lovingly and thoughtfully prepared home environment is not meant to be a replica of a classroom, home is a different place with a different purpose, but it can benefit by applying some of the same principles. Your home can compliment what your child experiences at Montessori and be in its own right a warm and wonderful place for living and learning together.

Independence and respect for your child can be used as the guiding principles in changing your home to suit the developing needs and abilities of your child. As you move around your house observe your child carefully and consider the possibilities of adapting the layout and arrangements of your home to suit your whole family. There are many physical changes that can be made in each room to enable your child to be as independent as possible. Each family is different and each home will be different but here are some ideas to consider.

## IN THE KITCHEN

- Can your child get themselves a drink? Some glasses should be in low cupboards and drinks can be placed in small/medium sized jugs in the fridge so the child can pour them and replace the jug in the fridge. Don't be afraid to have glassware, this helps the child learn to be careful.
- Can your child stand on a stable stool to reach the sink and to assist in preparing food and washing dishes? Or can you set up a table and washing tub at their level?
- Can your child work beside you at the kitchen bench or at a small table to assist with chopping, peeling and other meal preparation activities? Can they reach everything they need to set the table?
- Can your child prepare their own breakfast? Make their own sandwich for lunch?
- Is there a set of cleaning equipment that is the appropriate size for your child that they can reach when needed?
- Brush and pan, broom, mop, cloths/sponges etc Sponges can be cut to child size, and small but real cleaning equipment is available if you look hard. Please don't provide 'toy' equipment that does not work well.

## IN THE BEDROOM

- Can your child dress themselves? Do they have easy access to drawers and hangers for dressing and putting clean clothes away after washing?
- Can your child open and close their door? Switch their own light on and off?
- Are their toys kept on shelves to enable easy choosing and putting away? Are there too many toys to enable clear choices? (Toys can be rotated and many placed in storage tubs to help with this situation.) Having toy shelves rather than a toy box is an easy and significant improvement - toy boxes are frustrating places that encourage everything being thrown out onto the floor when searching and means the toys are more likely to get broken. Organise blocks etc into baskets or tubs on shelves. Favourite toys can be kept in their own special place on a shelf where there are easy to find.

## IN THE LOUNGE ROOM

- Is there an area or shelves where some of your child's toys and books can be kept so they have a place and some space in this shared room? Are there low tables and chairs?
- Are they able to have ready access to art and craft materials, pencils and scissors? If they know exactly where these resources are kept and can reach them at any time they are more likely to be able to give flight to their creativity.
- Can they play music when they want to – instruments, CD's?
- Are there interesting and beautiful objects in the room?

## IN THE BATHROOM

- Is there a stable stool to enable your child to wash their hands at the basin and brush their teeth?
- Can they easily go to the toilet themselves? Consider the style of clothes as well as ease of access to the toilet.

## IN THE GARDEN

- Does your child have child-sized tools to work with? Small spades, buckets etc. Do they have seeds to plant, small watering cans and most importantly, time and space to explore the outside world?

## Further reading

How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way by Tim Seldin

Learning Together, what Montessori can offer your Family by Kathi Hughes

A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom by Aline D. Wolf

Montessori Insights for Parents of Young Children by Aline D. Wolf

Montessori a Modern Approach by Paula Polk Lillard



*“Children in Montessori begin to know themselves as powerful people who can do all sorts of things for themselves. They think of adults as helpful friends who are always there if needed, but who never try to overly interfere or control their activities.”*

(Montessori International Magazine – Your Montessori Child)