

# How to Create a Montessori



## Environment in Your Own Home

**A Free eBook Provided By:**  
**Montessori American School**

*Learn more by visiting [www.MontessoriAmerican.com](http://www.MontessoriAmerican.com) or by calling (619) 422-1220.  
Copyright © 2012 Montessori American School, USA. All Rights Reserved.*

# How to Create a Montessori Environment in Your Own Home

## Table of Contents

<b>Why Use Montessori at Home?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A Child's Developmental Stages</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Prepare Your Home Environment for Montessori</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Read at Home</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Keep Communication Alive at Home</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Turn Off the TV</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Household Chores and Activities</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Play Time! - Toys in a Montessori Home</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Presentation of Toys</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Montessori in the Kitchen</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Recipes Your Children Can Help With</b>	<b>14</b>

Once you discover the benefits of a Montessori education, you will likely want to replicate this environment in your home. Here are some suggestions and tips for the best way to bring the joy of Montessori learning into your very own home.

# How to Create a Montessori Environment in Your Own Home

## Why Use Montessori at Home?

Montessori education is enhanced if you provide a consistency between your child's home and classroom. This does not necessarily mean you need to put Montessori materials in your living room, but simply that you should apply the Montessori perspective.



The principles developed for teachers by Maria Montessori can also be used by parents. This helps set the pace and expectations for your child, as well as direct their attitude and establish limits. By providing an extension

of the Montessori classroom lessons at home, parents can supplement and promote their child's self-education.

There are a variety of ways you can create a Montessori environment at home. These include:

- ▲ Understanding a child's developmental stages, and implementing age-appropriate activities
- ▲ Making minor adjustments to the setup of rooms your child uses, so that they are conducive to your child's independence and creativity
- ▲ Encouraging your child to help with household activities
- ▲ Planning family time that incorporates activities such as cooking together and reading together
- ▲ Encouraging less television and more opportunities for communication between you and your child
- ▲ Using Montessori philosophy when choosing types of toys and arranging them in the child's room



### A Child's Developmental Stages

During social development, children go through three primary stages:

1. The child perform activities for themselves and his or her inner needs
2. The child will occasionally perform tasks when asked. At this point, the child begins to control his or her will
3. The child will perform tasks anytime he or she is asked, or whenever he/she sees a practical need for it (approximately 1 to 1 1/2 years later)

Believe it or not, children have an innate desire to “work” (or be helpful with tasks). From the vital work of building a man or woman, the child derives the joyfulness that comes from “learning through discovery”.

The most important aspect of a child's personality and intellect develop through participation in the everyday life of the family. These include:

1. Order
2. Sequence
3. Independence
4. Self-control
5. Self-respect
6. Joy of learning
7. Accomplishing something purposeful

Involving a child in household tasks will help to produce an adult who enjoys life-long feelings of self-respect, independence, and concern for others.



# How to Create a Montessori Environment in Your Own Home

## Prepare Your Home Environment for Montessori

There are some easy ways you can ensure that your home environment adheres to the Montessori philosophy, and provides your child with the opportunity to begin doing tasks independently.

Below are some suggestions for arranging rooms in your home so that they meet this criteria.

### Bathroom

- ▲▲ Hang mirror at child's eye level
- ▲▲ Ensure toothbrush and comb are within reach
- ▲▲ Ensure towel, wash cloth, and towel rack are within reach
- ▲▲ Provide step stool at sink so child can turn on tap & wash hands

### Bedroom

- ▲▲ Lower clothes rack and provide hooks in closet for hanging clothes
- ▲▲ Provide a designated place for coat, shoes, raincoat, rubbers, etc.
- ▲▲ Provide a bed that your child can enter and exit by himself/herself
- ▲▲ Provide a small table and chairs
- ▲▲ Ensure there is a shelf for books that your child can reach



### Kitchen

- ▲▲ Have a designated chair at the table for your child
- ▲▲ Have a step stool available for the child to get his/her own water at the sink when he/she wants it
- ▲▲ Store sponges and towels at your child's level so he/she can wipe up spills
- ▲▲ Provide a low drawer that contains materials your child needs for actively participating in the care of the home environment



### Read at Home

Reading with your child is one of the most important things you can do to help them develop their reading and [language skills](#) and to encourage imagination. It's also a wonderful way to spend quality time together.

#### Types of Books to Read

For children under four years old, true stories are a must. Very young children devote their energy to exploring, ordering, and classifying their real environment. Make-believe or fantastic stories can confuse this important work. Young children are interested in stories about:

- ▲ Other children
- ▲ True things
- ▲ Family life
- ▲ Animals

Around five years old, children will begin to seek out make-believe and fantastic stories, as well as:

- ▲ Geography
- ▲ History
- ▲ Music
- ▲ Famous people
- ▲ Story Telling

In addition to reading stories, it is also beneficial to have “story telling” time at home. Pass along those home-spun yarns your ancestors told their children. Create some of your own and start back up the tradition by telling your stories to children. You can make up stories about your own child and what he/she did all day, or about your childhood, an exciting adventure, the adventure of your family pet, etc.



### Keep Communication Alive at Home

Effective communication between parents and children is so important in formative years (and even into adulthood!) Here are some things to consider when communicating with your child.

- ▲ Do you listen with genuine interest when your child speaks?
- ▲ Do you give him/her the opportunity to express interests, thoughts, and opinions?
- ▲ Does your family include your child in daily life, trips, and social relations with other adults and families?
- ▲ Do you insist that family members listen to each other, without interrupting?
- ▲ Do you speak to your child in a series of nods and grunts?
- ▲ Do you share thoughts with your child every day?
- ▲ Do you teach your child at least 10 new words a day through conversation and reading?
- ▲ Do you communicate the family values and morals to your child? (This is done through what you say and how you handle distressing as well as happy situations.)

By the age of six, children have adopted the family morality and attitude. Have you given him/her enough of yourself to last a lifetime?



# How to Create a Montessori Environment in Your Own Home

## Turn Off the TV

“Books are good for children and TV is bad.” This has become as common knowledge to most as the fact that fruits and veggies are better for you than sweets. But, do you actually know why this is?



The truth is, that if your child spends great amounts of time watching television, they are deprived of some very essential parts of childhood, such as:

- ▲ Social contact and communication with families
- ▲ Development of language
- ▲ The ability to express their spirit
- ▲ The closeness derived from family communication

In addition, excessive television hinders imagination, as well as reading and writing skills. When we hear someone speaking words, we create pictures in our mind. These mental images are necessary for reading and writing. Children who watch endless hours of TV often never develop the necessary ability to form these mental images.

Along with the lack of exposure to some positive communication, children are often given exposure to some negative images and words through television. They may be exposed to violence, inappropriate or disrespectful language and actions, fantasy and unnatural family relationships.

When you turn on television for your child, do you approve of what he/she will see? Is it consistent with your family values? Instead of resorting to television for entertainment, consider a carefully selected book as a substitute.





# How to Create a Montessori Environment in Your Own Home

## Household Chores and Activities

There are many [fun and creative ways](#) that you can involve your child in everyday activities that will help them grow in their independence and creative thought processes. Below are some exercises that will provide a range of activities which allow children to develop:

- ▲ Control and coordination of movement
- ▲ Awareness of environment
- ▲ Orderly thought patterns
- ▲ Independent work habits
- ▲ Responsibility

Even at an early age, your child can help perform tasks in your home environment, such as:

### Scrubbing sinks

Materials: Small sponge or scrub brush and a small can of cleaner with only one hole uncovered. CAUTION: Store the cleanser out of the child's reach. With younger children, you can apply the cleanser and they can help scrub. Or, for older children, they can apply the cleanser and do everything themselves while you just supervise.



### Helping unload groceries

Place grocery bags on the floor. Let your child hand you items, or let them put things away that are within their reach. CAUTION: Be mindful of cans or other items that are too heavy for a child.

### Dusting

Materials: Colorful flannel cloths (cut 6"x6"), small baby's hairbrush, and a place to put the dirty cloth. Start by showing your child the dust and asking if he/she would like to be a helper. Show him/her how to wrap the cloth around his/her fingers and slowly, carefully wipe away the dust. Show him/her how to change the

## How to Create a Montessori Environment in Your Own Home

position of the cloth as it collects dust. The brush can be used to get into carved furniture, nooks, and crannies.

### Vacuuming

Most children love to vacuum! Show your child how to connect the various parts of the vacuum, turn it on and off, and how to clean different parts of the rug. CAUTION: Make it very clear that an adult needs to plug the vacuum in!

### Pouring

Allow the child to pour drinks from a small pitcher, with only a cup of liquid. Gradually increase the amount of liquid as the child is older and more dexterous.

### Setting the table

Hand them one item at a time, and later set one full place and allow the child to replicate it for remaining place settings. Then, finally, allow them to do the whole process on their own.

### Folding and putting clothes away

A great way your child can help is by being responsible for folding and putting away his or her clothes. Show him/her how to fold various types of clothing, and where the appropriate drawer is for each item. Also teach him or her how to sort dirty clothes to be washed.

Other indoor & outdoor activities your child can help you with are:

- ▲ Washing/drying dishes
- ▲ Weeding
- ▲ Raking leaves
- ▲ Watering plants
- ▲ Washing the car
- ▲ Gift wrapping
- ▲ Decorating for holidays





# How to Create a Montessori Environment in Your Own Home

## Play Time! – Toys in a Montessori Home



Montessori philosophy believes that choosing toys in a Montessori home should challenge a child's interest and imagination, without being too difficult or too easy. If your child destroys a toy, it is often because the toy is either too simple, too difficult, or is in a deteriorated condition. Toys should inspire a sense of joy, wonder or fulfillment as a child plays with them. (Of course, first and foremost, toys should be safe!)

### Types of toys

Many toys found in a Montessori environment are both fun and educational. Some of the criteria for selecting educational toys and games are:

Children will be strategic and use their imagination when playing with toys. There will be a positive challenge for them, that when they have successfully completed the task they will feel a sense of accomplishment and want to do it again. Children will have an enjoyable experience and love what they are learning.

Toys should contribute to the [enhancement of life skills](#) that will prepare your child for a life-long love of learning. Children need smart toys and games that are fun, have a purpose, and are also durable and attractive. It is important to choose quality, over quantity, when selecting toys and games for your child.



# How to Create a Montessori Environment in Your Own Home

## Presentation of Toys

Playtime is about more than just having a big pile of toys for a child to sort through. Even if they are wonderful toys, they need to be presented to a child in a way that he/she can fully appreciate the toy.

### Storing Toys

We recommend that toys are stored on neutral colored toy shelves because they offer the possibility of displaying a toy in such a way that it attracts and lures the child to it. Each toy should be washed often and have all of its parts. If a toy is difficult to store or keep neatly on the shelf, make an attractive box for it. Each toy that has removable parts should have a beautiful small box for the storage of those parts.

### Keep it Fresh! – The art of rotating toys:

Toy rotation results in better use of toys. This way, children always feel that some of their toys are “new.” Limit the number of toys on the shelves to 8 or 9 at any one time. Remaining toys should be stored accessibly. As the child tires of certain toys they can replace them with a stored toy. Of course, if a child asks for a “stored toy,” he/she should be able to have it.

### Putting toys away

This is something that must be formed as a habit.

It's easy to form this as a good habit, but very difficult to break the habit of not putting toys away! Encourage your child to replace each toy on the shelf immediately after he/she has finished using it (even if he or she plans on using it again later).





## How to Create a Montessori Environment in Your Own Home



### Montessori in the Kitchen

There was a time when parents, grandparents, and children would be cooking together in the kitchen, sharing family recipes, and hearing secrets passed down from one generation to the next. This is still true in some cultures, but has unfortunately become a lost art in many American households. It's often hard for busy parents to take time out of their busy schedule to even teach basic cooking techniques to their children.

Yes, including your children in cooking requires time, patience, and some additional clean-up (especially with younger children). However, the payoff for you and your child is great! There are many benefits to including your children in cooking activities. For example:

- ▲ It can help get children interested in trying healthy foods they may normally not want to try
- ▲ It is a wonderful way to encourage creativity and independence.
- ▲ It's a great bonding activity and can be a lot of fun!



### Recipes Your Children Can Help With

Here are some recipes that are easy for children to help with. Younger children may need a little more hands-on help, while older children will just need your supervision.

#### **Pizza Bagels**

Ingredients: bagels, shredded mozzarella, tomato sauce, and pepperoni.

Directions:

Lightly toast bagel after slicing in half. Spread 2 tablespoons of tomato sauce onto bagel, then sprinkle mozzarella over the top to cover the bagel.

Place in microwave oven for 30 sec. Ready to eat!

#### **Goldfish Aquarium**

Ingredients: slice of toast, cream cheese, goldfish crackers, and blue food coloring.

Directions:

Color cream cheese with blue food coloring. Spread blue cream cheese onto toast. Finish by putting goldfish over the toast. It looks like little fish are swimming in the ocean!

#### **Decorate Cupcakes**

Ingredients: cake batter, cupcake cups, white frosting, food coloring, icing, sprinkles, and decorations.

Directions:

After baking cupcakes, let them cool for about an hour. Use food coloring to make various colored frostings. Decorate with colored frosting, sprinkles, and other decorations or candy pieces. Let your child's creativity go wild!



## How to Create a Montessori Environment in Your Own Home

### Peanut Butter & Jelly Sushi Rolls

Don't worry, it's not as gross as it sounds, since there is no actual "sushi" or raw fish involved here. These are actually quite tasty, and kids LOVE them! If you're having a "sushi night" for the adults, this is a great way to keep your children involved.

Ingredients: 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, 2 tablespoons of strawberry jelly, and 2 slices of white bread.

#### Directions:

Remove crust from bread. With a rolling pin or large soup can, completely flatten bread. Spread 1 tablespoon of peanut butter and one tablespoon of jelly on each slice. Roll each slice into a tight spiral. Cut each spiral into 4 pieces. 8 pieces per serving.

### Worms in the Dirt

This one is also very tasty, despite the name!

Ingredients: Oreo cookies, 2 cups of cold milk, 1 pack of chocolate instant pudding mix, 8 ounces of cool whip topping thawed, and gummy worms.



#### Directions:

Put cookies into sealable bag and close tightly. Using a rolling pin, roll and crush the cookies until crumbly. Pour the milk and pudding into a large bowl. Whisk well until all the pudding mix is dissolved. Let stand for 5 minutes. Add cool whip and 1/2 of the crushed cookies. Stir mixture.

Place a large spoonful of crushed cookies into the bottom of the plastic cup. Add the pudding mixture on top of that until the cups are 3/4 full. Add 1 large gummy worm so that it is half in the cup, and half hanging out of the top of the cup. Spoon in more crushed cookie around the worm to hold it in place. Top it with cool whip. Serve chilled. You may use as many worms as desired.