

## Montessori Moment - Toddler Room

Happy New Year!

It has been wonderful to hear of your Winter break adventures and see how our toddler friends have grown. We would like to also welcome two new friends to our community: Miss Maybelle and Miss Inaya! Both are acclimating very well to the routine of our room.

This week's Montessori Moment also provides a small update on our classroom. We now have beautiful cloth placemats for both snack and lunch use! Special thanks to Mimi for sewing 45 of these in her "spare" time.

Setting a table properly, a skill that I (Heather) didn't obtain until my teenage years, is not out of reach for our young friends. By outlining the *toddler-sized* silverware and dishes we use at mealtimes (we used a permanent marker), he or she will learn the proper placement of materials with ease. You might also consider purchasing an inexpensive pitcher for pouring water/milk at the table as well- our friends are getting quite good at this! You can find *toddler-sized* pitchers at many second-hand stores (known as creamers); the small white pitcher below came from Meijer.



"The Kavanaugh Report" also speaks in favor of the child's own place setting:

"A placemat may not seem like much, but it really is. It provides a baby/toddler with the chance to use real materials, it speaks to their sense of order and gives them (or plants the

seeds for) the ability to set the table, and it's a beautiful touch. Practically, it can also make eating easier by keeping plates/bowls cups from sliding around."

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Our Montessori Moment this week will center on fostering independence within the child. Independence is a critical component of the Montessori philosophy.

***"Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed."  
- Maria Montessori***

Article: [https://www.montessoridaoshi.com/single-post/2017/11/15/The-Kind-of-Help-a-Kid-Can-Do-Withouth?utm\\_campaign=63daf38a-cc3e-481e-be79-a7b53e4b1561&utm\\_source=so](https://www.montessoridaoshi.com/single-post/2017/11/15/The-Kind-of-Help-a-Kid-Can-Do-Withouth?utm_campaign=63daf38a-cc3e-481e-be79-a7b53e4b1561&utm_source=so)

Catherine McTamaneay reminds to, "**Remember: it is not whether the child can complete the task independently that determines our intervention. It is whether the child feels he can.** Adults can always identify ways to modify a task to manage the level of challenge, but we should not seek to remove the challenge entirely. Instead, when we step in to complete tasks on the child's behalf, we should ask ourselves first whether doing so would be at the child's expense. **Does the activity require adult assistance or is it just done faster or more efficiently with an adult's help?** Does completing the task for the child promote his or her ability to complete it independently in the future? Finally, would certain modifications or support allow the child to complete the task without relying on an adult?"

As a personal example, I (Heather) was reminded of this when I watched Mark take a tumble outside. As an attempt to narrate the situation, I simply stated, "You fell down." To which Mark quickly replied, "And I got back up!" What a wonderful reminder of the resilience of young children in the face of difficulty!

Coming into the classroom each morning is a wonderful way to put this concept into practice. We invite you to come with enough time to provide as much or as little assistance in taking off/putting on shoes. If this process is new, think of small ways the child can assist in the process (putting one foot up on the opposite knee, pulling the Velcro, pushing the foot into the shoe, etc.). After this you may try verbal instruction, but only as needed. Some days are short on time, and we understand that. In those situations, feel free to seek out an available staff member who can provide this support as you say your goodbyes and exit.

How else can we nourish our child's innate desire for independence? The NAMC (North American Montessori Center) training blog gives the following tips:

- 1. Allow extra time for self-care tasks (dressing, putting on shoes, brushing teeth, etc.).
- 2. Resist the temptation to jump in and complete the task for the toddler.
- 3. Offer gentle suggestions that may ease the task: "Try sitting down to put on your shoes."
- 4. Use low shelving for books and toys, so the toddler can retrieve the items herself and be able to help with clean up.
- 5. Provide toddlers with child-size furniture, utensils, and tools.

Warmest wishes to you and yours this Winter break! We will see you in again 2019!

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Great news! We have discovered that the DCFS temperature rule is not as specific as we had previously thought! At this point, we are able to go outside in all weather that is not considered "extreme" in temperature or condition.

Here is a checklist of outdoor items to equip your child with on any given day:

1. A warm, waterproof jacket (perhaps over another layer)
2. A snow hat
3. One pair of waterproof gloves (especially for snowy days)
4. One pair of soft gloves/mittens (easier to grip items)
5. Snow boots- priority (Consignment stores are good places to check!)
6. Snow pants? -up to you (Sometimes it can hinder movement, and often, a longer coat and snow boots cover much of the legs)

As much as we would love to remember each child's mittens, hats, etc., it is a difficult task when we are dealing with 15 of your precious little ones. If you, or whoever picks up your child from school, could check for each of the above items, it is far easier to trade/retrieve items before walking out the door. Labeling also helps us immensely! :)

Thank you for helping your child to dress for success in Winter weather.

Our Montessori Moment comes from Jeanne-Marie Paynel. She has created many videos of instruction on how to present activities to the child. Both videos included below deal with food preparation.

As you watch, please notice the following:

1. The beauty of the available materials
2. How all materials are contained on one tray
3. That all materials, from start to finish, are created with the child in mind

1. Banana Slicing: <https://vimeo.com/163950783>

\*Note: When presenting a lesson to the child, be silent. Let them watch your movements closely. Paynel usually mentions this, and talked way too much during this particular presentation, in my (Heather's) opinion.

**"Do not tell them how to do it. Show them how to do it and do not say a word. If you tell them, they will watch your lips move. If you show them, they will want to do it themselves." - Maria Montessori**

2. Grating Cinnamon: <https://vimeo.com/187255769>

## **Montessori Moment Toddler Room**

Hello Toddler Community,

Thank you to all who sent in fruit for our Thanksgiving celebration. We enjoyed a wonderful fruit salad! We are certainly grateful for you and wish you a safe, relaxing break. :)

***"Let us leave the life free to develop within the limits of the good, and let us observe this inner life developing. This is the whole of our mission." -Maria Montessori***

Our weekly Montessori Moment for this week is centered on food and the child. Ellyn Satter has created a "division of responsibility" around mealtimes with our children. "The division of responsibility in feeding encourages [us] to take leadership with the *what, when,* and *where* of *feeding* and let [the] child determine *how much* and *whether* to eat of what [we]

provide."

Article: <https://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/how-to-feed/the-division-of-responsibility-in-feeding/>

"[Our] jobs with feeding are to...

- Choose and prepare the food.
- Provide regular meals and snacks.
- Make eating times pleasant.
- Step-by-step, show [the] child by example how to behave at family mealtime.
- Be considerate of [the] child's lack of food experience without catering to likes and dislikes.
- Not let [the] child have food or beverages (except for water) between meal and snack times.
- Let [the] child grow into the body that is right for him.

Part of [our] feeding job is to **trust [the] child** to...

- Eat the amount he needs.
- Learn to eat the food [we] eat.
- Grow predictably in the way that is right for him.
- Learn to behave well at mealtime. "

This can be a sensitive topic, especially if we were raised with a different mentality and experience around food. Trust is the element being emphasized here. We want what is best for our children, and it can be difficult to trust that he/she is getting the nutrients he or she needs. However, if we consistently provide nutritious, balanced meals that we enjoy (yahoo!), Satter reminds us that:

"Your child wants to eat and he wants to grow up to eat the food you eat. Beyond doing your part with structured, sit-down family meals and snacks, you don't have to do anything to get it to happen. **Just be there and enjoy your own food.** Keep in mind that grownup food is all new to your child, and he has to learn. For him, it is like any other skill such as reading or bike riding – **he learns it bit by bit, at his own pace, because he *wants* to, not because it is your idea.** He will eat like a child: some days a lot, other days not so much, only one or two foods and not everything at a meal. What he eats one day he ignores the other. Don't try to pressure your child in any way to eat certain amounts or types of food. Don't try to get him to eat less than he wants. Such controlling tactics backfire. Instead, relax, enjoy your own meal, and teach your child to behave nicely at mealtime. Sooner or later (for some kids *much* later) he will eat almost everything you eat. "

Here is a BONUS article and video with more on this

topic: <https://www.janetlansbury.com/2010/01/baby-table->

[manners/?fbclid=IwAR2vCV7oEuJx1TyPLRAQvO4cog1E2\\_hZeT8wEfrQURLCTxN6F7vOk14ngBY#.W-sW3j\\_JcpM.facebook](https://www.facebook.com/manners/?fbclid=IwAR2vCV7oEuJx1TyPLRAQvO4cog1E2_hZeT8wEfrQURLCTxN6F7vOk14ngBY#.W-sW3j_JcpM.facebook)

Bon Appétit!