



Montessori House
Curriculum for Toddlers
18 Months to 2 1/2 Years of Age

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By the Time Your Child is Three

This album provides Montessori material for working with toddlers up to the age of three. The work will prepare your child for the first year of Montessori Primary class, which begins at two and a half to three years of age. There is a slight overlap in focus that will assure that your child receives all of the necessary skills to continue successfully.

By the time you finish working with this album, your child will be quite accomplished in a range of fine and gross motor skills, hand-eye coordination, language, social development, and self-control.

A three-year old can do the following:

- Eat
- Go to the toilet
- Choose from a limited selection of work
- Ready for group interaction in a social setting
- Adjust to a simple change in plans

Self-control is also evident as he or she:

- Balance well enough to walk securely
- Carry a simple object and walk without bumping into things
- Stand without leaning
- Control large muscles for complex tasks such as scrubbing, sweeping, hanging clothes
- Controls body movements while walking or doing other motions
- Exhibits an awareness of body position in its surroundings

Crucial hand-eye coordination has developed so that he or she can:

- Use the pincer grasp
- Make a swiping motion
- Close all fingers
- Use the finger and thumb grip
- Use the three-fingered grasp
- Squeeze hands strongly together

Language use as developed so that it is possible to:

- Express him or herself in the adult form of the language so that a non-family member can understand
- Carry and handle books appropriately
- Show familiarity with songs and music
- Associate language with real objects and use this command of the language to interact with the world around him or her, for example, requesting a particular dish for dinner
- Participate in conversations that include adults

Toddler Infilare Exercises (Series V): Cubes on Vertical Dowel



The Infilare Exercises set includes material that encourages your toddler to practice hand-eye coordination along with finger positioning and grasping.

The set includes five pieces of equipment and we present three key pieces. The other two pieces are used in the same way as these three we present here.

This material provides well-suited to the developmental needs of this age group because they provide immediate feedback about the results of these fine motor actions.

Material made for older children or adults is often frustrating because 1) children's hands are too small to work with it properly, and 2) there is no exact feedback about the success of an action or why it failed.

In addition, there is a concept known as "crossing the midline" which you will see clearly in the next few exercise. It is the experience of moving an object into place, starting from the beginning point, crossing the midline, and then putting the object in its final spot.

These cubes on a vertical dowel are painted in the lovely dark blue finish that is used for many pieces of equipment in the Montessori classroom.

Material needed:

- Cubes on a Vertical Dowel (made by Nienhuis or you)
- Mat for floor work

What to do:

1. During a quiet indoor activities period of the day, invite your child to try this equipment. Remember to extend the invitation to your child, even if he or she is too young to give you an answer. It's always nice to be asked!
2. For toddlers, you can ask them to please unroll the mat. For younger children, go ahead and unroll the mat and then carry them onto it.
3. Put the equipment down on the mat in front of you.
4. Take the cubes off one by one and place them on the mat in front of the equipment.
5. Replace the cubes one by one. Put each cube on top of the other soundlessly.
6. Ask your child if he or she would like to try.
7. Put the equipment in front of your child and let him or her use it. If your child does not put the cubes back on the dowel, give him or her a bit of time to explore and handle the cubes. If the cubes never go on the dowel, you can sit down with your child, pick up a cube, examine it, and then put it on the dowel. Does your

- When your child has finished working with the equipment, you and your child can share cleanup, if your child is old enough to carry the equipment or roll up the mat.

In the classroom, we present equipment and exercises in a way that shows children how to handle the equipment gently. At home, it will help if you keep your Montessori equipment and workspace separate from the play area, so your child will come to associate this space and equipment with certain behavior. It can be difficult if you present this equipment in an area where, for example, your child plays with blocks and knocks them down or practices throwing balls.

For those of you making equipment at home, remember to make the top of the dowel rounded and blunt. The cubes are about three inches wide. Think about buying a large container of paint for future material, so you can have a consistent shade of blue, and look for child-safe paint. A foam or very fine-bristled brush will leave the smoothest finish on the cubes.

Most of the material used in the Infant & Toddler program is solid and made out of wood. If you drop it, it will make noise. If you throw it, the equipment will get scratched. This helps children see the need to hold, handle, and place equipment gently. If children of this age work with plastic equipment all the time, they get accustomed to handling it roughly because it doesn't matter.

Think of how sloppily we can type on computers because all our mistakes go away instantly. Does anyone remember how careful we had to be typing on a typewriter? It is the same process with young children. You can use a sippy cup in the car, but try to get them used to using and handling real material whenever possible to help them increase this type of awareness.

Your notes

Date of initial presentation ____ Your child's age ____

Observations:

Control of Movement - Silence Exercises

You can do this exercise with one child, but it is really a group exercise for at least two children. Your child will need the presence of another child to make the silence more compelling and different than just one person not talking or moving.

This exercise builds your child's awareness of his or her actions and surroundings as the focus on controlling movement and sound comes into play.

Materials needed:

- Taped circle on the floor

Presentation:

1. Gather a small group of children at the circle.
2. Everyone sits just behind the circle (so that you can see the circle at your feet when you sit) cross-legged with their hands in their laps.
3. Invite your child to get ready to make silence. Ask everyone to please close their eyes. Tell them you will clap when it is time to open their eyes.
4. After about 20 seconds, clap twice.
5. Discuss the silence. Did anyone hear things in the room during the silent period?

Next time, let the silence last a few more seconds. Afterwards, ask the children about sounds they heard. Ask if they could hear their own breathing.

Presentation #2:

See if one child can carry a bell silently and hand it to another child without making any noise. Have the other children listen for noise.

Presentation #3:

Have children sit outside. Listen for sounds in the environment.

You can use the silence exercise before dismissing children from class or sending them outside to play.

The goal of this exercise is to help your child develop the control of self. It also provides practice in concentration.

Your notes

Date of initial presentation ____ Your child's age ____

Observations: