

GUIDELINES for the MONTESSORI & ME Classroom

Discovery Montessori School

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Developmental Task for Toddlers

- * To learn to think and solve problems on their own
- * To make choices
- * To develop concentration
- * To know what they need and ask for help
- * To learn to use tools and participate in daily life
- * To develop all their senses – sight, taste, touch, hearing and smell
- * To test reality and practice saying “no”
- * Opportunities for movement and maximum effort; to challenge the laws of gravity
- * To learn how to express feelings – from love to anger
- * To separate from parents in a healthy way
- * To create their “self”

You should understand that Children learn best through:

- * Purposeful movement
- * Self-chosen activity
- * Activity that fulfills the need of a sensitive period (developmental phase)
- * Repetition and concentration
- * Experiencing order and organization
- * We must remember to: observe the child’s movement and the coordination necessary to complete a task. Analyze the sequence of steps involved and give just the necessary help a child needs. Be careful not to substitute our activity for theirs.

Toddlers are so wonderful and exciting. No two days are ever alike, yet that is what toddlers thrive on.... *Order and Sameness*. The following gives you some guidelines as you interact with your child and the other children in class.

1. Relax... Mistakes are always our friends... keep in mind the process is more important than the product.
2. Let your child do as much for him/her self as possible. The environment is set-up in such a way as to allow free exploration for your child. You are part of this exploration as you follow your child through their morning routine. You may assist your child in transporting an activity, but be sure to include him/her in the process.
3. Speak softly. Avoid calling across the room to a child, rather go over to the child and get down on his/her level to speak. Toddlers are great imitators. They pick up on everything we do. If you talk quietly to your child, your child will learn to speak quietly. Remember, too, we speak to others not only through words. Our gestures, our touch as we guide our child’s hand, our movements all convey messages. Sometimes words get in the way!

4. When your child chooses a work, go with him/her to a rug or table and try to take your turn first... showing your child how to do the activity. When demonstrating work, move SLOWLY, and DELIBERATELY. Keep the child interested by pointing out an interesting part of your action (i.e. "Watch to see when the last bean pours out of the spout"...) Allow time for your child to repeat and make his/her own discoveries.
5. Children are very comfortable working on the floor. Most of the activities in the classroom can be done on the floor...except for pouring and water work. Floor work should be done on a rug. This aids the child's sense of order by keeping all pieces together and sends a message to others that this material is being used. You may want to have your child "hug a rug" and lay it on the floor while you hold the material of interest. You and your child can also practice walking around a rug as an activity... so that he/she can eventually have a level of respect for another child's work by not stepping on his/her rug. Remind your child to put away the work and the rug when he/she is finished working on the floor.
6. State things positively, both the acceptable behavior and the unacceptable behavior. State what to DO, not just what NOT TO DO.

For example: INSTEAD OF

TRY

"No running"....."We walk in doors. You may run outside." "Slow feet please"

"Don't carry it that way..."If you carry is like this (demonstrate) it won't tip."

"You forgot your chair."....."Take time to push in your chair."

7. Try to avoid interrupting your child while he/she is working, especially if he/she is concentrating. If you wish to make a point about the work they are doing wait for a natural breaking point. Children will often repeat an activity over and over again (or want to hear the same story read night after night.) This repetition is vital for it not only helps them in learning a particular piece of knowledge, but also aids in the development of concentration and contributes to the need for order.
8. If your child is having difficulty choosing a piece of work, try limiting his/her options. ("Would you like to do this or this" or "What would you like to choose from THIS shelf.")
9. Children at this age aren't as interested in working together as they are next to one another. However, one child should ask permission before joining another child's work. And that child is free to answer yes or no.
10. Always follow all the ground rules yourself. Act as a model for the children in all ways. Join in on group activities. You will find your child more willing to participate if you do.

We are looking forward to our time together, you are your child's first teacher and the most important person in his/her life, relax and have fun together!