

## Montessori in the Home with Cheryl and Heather

Understanding the developmental needs of the child, creating a physical environment that supports their developmental needs, and communicating in a way that is clear to the child.

# The Child

- 0-6 Help me do it by myself
- The goal of the child: physical independence
- The child has an enormous task:
  - coordinate
  - strengthen
  - understand
  - experience
  - adapt
- How must they accomplish this enormous task? By any means necessary and through their own efforts. Do we...
  - Leave them to their own devices? No
  - Try to stop the forces of nature? No
  - Provide a safe space and means for the child? Yes
- How does the child learn?
  - takes in stimulus through the senses
  - observing
  - by experience
  - through trial and error
  - repetition
  - by doing
- Expectations, gentle steady guidance in the desired direction, consistency, space, modeling, provide the means
- Help them learn how to discern
  - plant example

- hitting example
- weather example
- body functions example

## Materials and Layout

- Child sized objects and furniture
- Stools
- Low shelving
- Hooks at their level
- Limited and rotating selection for toys and activities
- Permanent collection of materials for caring for the environment
- Care cards, chore chart, job list
  - introduce slowly,
  - do together at first,
  - “I’ll show you how to water the plants.”

## Aligned Communication

- Communication involves words, body language, facial expression, and tone of voice. When children receive our messages to them, our emotion has the most weight, and the actual words, the least. After all, body language, facial expression, and tone of voice are truer indicators than words. For the most effective communication with children all four of these elements must be aligned.
- When communicating with children our goal is to be clear and respectful so the child can trust that we say what we mean and we mean what we say. The type of communication that the child experiences and observes from others is what he or she will internalize and replicate.
- True and Brief + Positive Phrasing = most effective when communicating with children
- Positive phrasing is clear, unambiguous, and invites cooperation
- Helpful words:
  - can: “You can draw on the paper with the crayon.” “We can go to the park after you put away your stuffed animals.”

- may: “You may put your toys away now.”
  - let’s: “Let’s get our shoes on now.”
  - I see that: “I see that your clothes are still on the floor. Do you remember where your laundry basket is?” “I see that you’re feeling anxious about going to school.”
  - it’s time to: “It is time to eat now.”
  - are: “We are leaving now.”
  - If: “If you want to use the markers you may keep them on the paper.”
  - “If you want to go to the park, you need to come with me when I let you know it’s time to go.”
- “Okay?” This word at the end of a statement gives the impression that there is a choice to decline. We don’t want to give the impression that something is optional when it is actually not.
- “It’s time to go now, okay?” compared to “It’s time to go now.”
- Offering choices
- “Do you want to go in 5 minutes or ten minutes?”
  - “Do you want to put on your shoes first or your coat first?”
  - “Do you want to brush your teeth in the shower or at the sink?”
  - “At bed time do you want to have one story or two?”
  - “What would you rather put away first, your legos or your cars?”

### “Do” commands

Children are doers who love to move. It is harder for them to interpret statements that tell them *not* to do something (“Don’t stand on the table”). When told what *not* to do, they’re still left in the dark about what to do. So let’s help them by bringing their attention to what they *can* do.

- “Don’t run” turns into: “We have to walk when we’re at the store.”
- “Don’t touch that” turns into: “You can play with this right now.”
- “Don’t interrupt me” turns into: “Put your hand on my arm to let me know you need to talk to me while I finish this conversation.”
- “Don’t jump on the couch!” turns into: “You can jump on this (mini trampoline/cushions/pillows, etc...).”

- “Don’t kill that spider” turns into: “Let’s help it onto the broom and take it outside.”
- “Don’t throw the laundry!” turns into: “You can help fold it or find something else to do.”

#### Helpful Questions/Prompts

- I wonder... ? “I wonder if you can put on your coat before this sand timer runs out?”  
“I wonder what else you’ll build/draw?” “I wonder what you’ll do at the birthday party?”
- What else... ? “What else do you need to take to school?”
- What would you like to do about that? Child: My shirt is wet!! Adult: Oh my! What would you like to do about that?
- Do you remember... ? “Do you where your towel goes when you’re done using it?”
- Did you know... ? “Did you know that if you say ‘excuse me’ people will gladly move out of your way?” “Did you know it is considered rude to say you don’t like what someone else is eating? For some people, it really hurts their feelings.”
- Show me... “Show me how much you can do first!”
- Let’s see... “Let’s see how much we can get done in 5 minutes.”