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# Learning from Home Handbook

**Toddler Class and Children's House  
Bilingual Montessori School of Paris**

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## A Vision of Learning from a Montessori Perspective

*“Our aim is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core.”*

*~Dr Maria Montessori*

As we embark on a time of ‘Learning from Home,’ our aim is to create a Montessori-based framework that serves our students while supporting parents as we all adapt to a different daily routine. It is important to us that the children’s activity during this time be enjoyable, thoughtful, challenging and rewarding.

Replicating what happens in our Toddler and Children’s House classrooms is not something we can achieve during this period. Our goal is to work in collaboration with families to keep alive the culture of learning that is unique to Montessori and provide families with support and activities that match the developmental needs and characteristics of the child.

### How do we establish this at home?

The Montessori method is all about the process. While completion of work is important, it is our approach that makes all the difference. Learning is most effective when it is within a greater context. When we connect subjects and concepts, we establish meaning which fuels motivation in students. Above all, we want children to feel connected to their learning, not simply “complete assignments” while at home.

Learning together with a sense of exploration, curiosity and discovery results in deeper and more meaningful experiences for children. This instils a great sense of ownership and responsibility in the child.

It is important to us that we maintain a feeling of connectedness throughout this process. We will be in regular contact in a variety of ways and continued communication between teachers and families throughout the period of closure is assured.

The guidelines throughout this handbook will outline how the Bilingual Montessori School of Paris will support all our families throughout this period of ‘Learning from Home.’



## The Montessori Prepared Environment

For our younger students, the learning environment is your home and surroundings. This means finding ways to support independence, engage in meaningful tasks and supplement learning through various activities suggested by teachers.

Where age-appropriate you might like to discuss ‘Learning from Home’ with your child and include them in some decision-making processes:

- Ask them where to set up a work space (if applicable)
- Make a schedule together that works for your family (when to take breaks / have time outdoors, etc.)
- Gather ideas for activities and projects
- Organize materials

## The Uninterrupted Work Cycle

Establishing a routine that works for your family is an essential first step to creating a successful learning environment at home. Children are very familiar with this framework from school. In a Montessori classroom, children are given large blocks of time in order to explore their work deeply (8h45-11h45 / 13h00-14h30). This contributes directly to the development of concentration and provides opportunities to collaborate and problem-solve. It is the framework that fosters child-centered as opposed to teacher-directed learning.

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## Toddler Class (2 - 3 years)

### Students can be expected to:

- Enjoy family life with developmentally appropriate contributions

### Parents are invited to:

- Remain mindful and respectful about the growing self-esteem and sense of independence that your child is developing
- Help your child with the hardest part of a task (not the whole task)
- Initiate verbal communication frequently, ask questions, share concerns and observations
- Be consistent; follow routines and clear sequences for each activity
- Limit screen time
- Include your child in household chores
- Provide opportunities for outdoor activities (gross motor skill development)
- Let go of perfection.

### Here is a non-exhaustive list of activities for your child:

#### Dress, undress:

- Choose clothing (adult limits the choice to two outfits)
- Put on and take off clothes independently
- Put laundry in the laundry basket, put clothing in the washing machine, remove the laundry from the machine, hang up the laundry, fold the laundry ...

#### In the bathroom:

- Prepare the bath products
- Prepare and take a relaxing bath
- Dry oneself with a towel
- Brush teeth, brush hair
- Go to the toilet (and perhaps this is a good time to stop diapers if the child seems ready)

#### In the bedroom:

- Sort, put away toys
- Make one's own bed

#### In the kitchen:

- Clean the table
- Set the table
- Put the plates in the dishwasher, do the dishes
- Clean vegetables
- Make a cake (adult first pour the ingredients into cups that he or she can then pour into a bowl)
- Peel and cut a banana, a cucumber, squeeze a citrus fruit ...
- Also: vacuum, clean the table, set the table, sweep the floor, water plants, feed pets ...



Your child can participate in all daily household activities. Of course, a child should not be forced or obligated to do all of these activities: choose those that seem most suitable for him or her and offer them as a game. Show the child how to do things properly, with gentle and patient gestures.



**Fun game ideas:**

- Painting, drawing with markers, pencils, chalk, play-dough, cutting, and collage are some preferred artistic activities in the class.

**For hand-eye coordination activities, the children enjoy:**

- Opening and closing boxes of different shapes, Tupperware, cardboard boxes, wallets, jars
- All kinds of puzzles
- Threading beads to make bracelets and necklaces
- Sliding coins into a piggy bank

(If possible, and to ensure continuity with the class, you can present these activities on small trays stored on a small shelf at the height of your child.)

If outings are not possible, you will need to find activities to move with your child: dance, jump, laugh, wave scarves, do yoga or practice indoor sports!

Remember that child development professionals recommend avoiding any screen time before three years of age; so try to keep your child's screen time to a minimum (or even completely avoid it). Give priority to books!

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## Children's House (3 - 6 years)

### Students can be expected to:

- Enjoy family life with developmentally appropriate contributions

### Parents are invited to:

- Remain mindful about your child's stress or worries during this time of change
- Monitor communication about your child from their teachers
- Initiate communication with teachers about questions, ideas, concerns, feedback
- Support your child's independence in daily life activities
- Be mindful of and allow children to continue periods of concentration
- Establish daily routines and expectations
- Limit screen time
- Provide opportunities for daily physical activity

Here is a non-exhaustive list of activities for your Children's House child:

## Mobilize language in all its dimensions: Oral

### Talk:

- The child discovers new words every day in discussions with adults and other children.
- Adult can name what the child does, what he looks at, what he feels, before the child is able to attach words.
- To help him develop his language, speak to him using a precise and varied vocabulary (nouns, verbs, adjectives) in increasingly complex sentences (because, while ...). Name categories, so that the child increases his vocabulary.
- Talk with your child during daily activities. Comment on everything that is done: when washing, preparing the meal, when you are creating a plan.

### Read:

- If the child sees you using books, he will imitate you.
- Choose suitable books: picture books, simple everyday stories.



### Listen to a story:

- Listen to at least one story a day.
- Your child can listen to the same story several times.

### Recite / sing:

- Recite poems and sing lullabies, nursery rhymes, joyful songs.
- You can combine gestures, use exaggerated expressions to help your child learn.

### Make up stories together:

- Encourage your child to tell stories from objects in his environment: toys, photos, furniture.
- Make up small plays together, adapting to your child's words.

### Remember:

- Evoke memories using photos. Discuss what was experienced, with whom, where?

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## Name Things

### Ask your child:

- to say what he does. “How are you dressing this morning?”
- to name what surrounds it. “What are you picking up?”
- to say what he feels during certain moments: “You are crying ... Are you sad, angry ...?”

### Name categories:

- “You chose the color blue”
- “The vegetables in the soup are leeks, carrots ...”

### Sound out words:

- Identify syllables, sounds, letters, from words that you use
- Continue a series of rhyming words (cat, bat, sat ...),
- Clap hands to the syllables of a word
- Lengthen the last syllable (po-LICE)
- Provide images of words so that your child can make the visual connection

## Mobilize language in all its dimensions: Writing

### Write:

- The child learns to write before he reads.
- If he sees you writing, he will want to imitate you and be interested in writing.

### Draw:

- To prepare for writing, ask your child to draw lines and circles on different sizes.
- Your child can trace with his finger in the sand, on a tray covered with flour, on a slate with an erasable marker, on sheets with colored pencils ...



## Write together

### Ask your child, “What do you want me to write?”:

- his or her first name
- a shopping list
- a communication to someone (postcard, SMS, email, etc.)
- Write words with moving letters. The first word he writes is his first name. Then, your child can try to form simple, phonetic words such as dad, pig, cat

## Encourage structured thinking

### Count:

- In everyday situations, ask your child to get: 5 potatoes, 1 apple, 2 carrots to prepare a meal or snack.
- Count the number of days left until your child’s birthday using a calendar.
- Sing nursery rhymes: “one, two buckle my shoe”



- Show him how to decompose small quantities (3 is 2 and another 1; 1 and another 2).
- Counting books and the fingers of the hand are good supports for training.



### **Classify / associate:**

- The child observes, compares and sorts shapes, objects, to begin to understand that any object can belong to several categories and that certain objects cannot belong.
- Put away objects according to their length, size, shape, color or in a specific order (ascending or descending).

### **Sort:**

- Sorting is choosing from a set of objects that correspond to the stated criterion, and excluding those that are not suitable. Suggest to your child small cars of different colors, ask him to sort all the red cars.
- Ask him to put together what goes together.

### **Estimate:**

- To estimate is to approximate quantities: “a little”, “a lot”.
- Ask your child to put lots of toys in a chest. Then ask him to keep a few.
- Compare elements of a group: there are more than ..., less than ..., same ...

### **Compare:**

- Use vocabulary for comparisons: there are more than ..., less than ..., same ...
- When interacting with him, use a precise vocabulary (plus, minus, as much, add, remove...)
- Suggest that your child store wooden sticks from the shortest to the longest.

### **Continue series:**

- Identify with your child the sequence that organizes a pattern and continue it.
- Help him or her make a necklace made of a series of “red-red-blue / red-red-blue / ...” pearls.

### **Build:**

- Build an object using the instruction manual.
- Reproduce an assembly from a model (puzzles, tessellations, solid assemblies).

## **Expression through physical activity**

### **Move objects:**

- Ask your child to move various objects (boxes, stroller, etc.) from one place to another, this allows him or her to overcome physical obstacles, bypass them...

### **Manipulate objects:**

- Manipulate objects (a ball, a hoop, etc.) by throwing, rolling, catching, squeezing.
- You can offer to play with balls of different sizes, shapes and weights.
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### **Moving self:**

- Using physical space to move
- Play games, offer to walk, run, play cat, jump ...
- Arrange obstacle courses

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- Balancing in activities such as
    - walking backwards;
    - hanging by the arms;
    - turning, swinging.
  - Getting around in different ways (crawling, jumping, running, walking) or with different unusual objects or vehicles: stilts, skateboard, roller skates, scooter, bicycle..., in various environments.

## Expression through artistic activities

Expose your child to many different forms of artistic expression. They will gradually arouse his emotions and his or her imagination will be fueled by what he or she watches and observes.

Pay attention to the music, colors, materials, different arts that your child likes.

### Play music:

- Sing, play music with your child.
- Offer musical instruments: small percussions, maracas, tambourine ... and encourage him to reproduce rhythms.
- Invite him to tell you what he hears, what he feels.
- Sing nursery rhymes and favorite songs with your child.

### Paint:

- Paint with various tools (hands, brushes, sponges, caps) on various supports (cardboard, paper, large or small format ...). Offer your child a space where he or she can make a mess while creating art.
- Exhibiting your child's art work in the home.

### Model:

- Offer modeling clay, so your child can discover volume production.



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## Explore the world

### Explore:

- The child identifies and names animals, identifies their characteristics (fur, feathers, scales, etc.), modes of movement (walking, flying, swimming).
- He identifies carnivores and herbivores.
- Suggest to your child each day to locate and name the different parts of the human body, and to implement a few rules of personal hygiene.
- It is through the manipulation and discovery of different objects and materials, that your child will distinguish the living from the non-living.

### Garden:

- Garden with your child: sow seeds, water a plant every day at the same time, remove weeds, add potting soil.
- Invite your child to observe flowers (smells, colors ...), vegetable plantations, fruit trees

### Handle nature:

- Touching nature allows a child to explore and discover the world.
- Encourage your child, on a walk, to collect natural elements (wood, leaves, chestnuts ...).
- You can also offer him or her a basin of water, a sandbox and objects for pouring, pouring, emptying, filling in the home.

### Discover oneself:

- Observing himself in a mirror allows your child to name the different parts of the face and body, to look at the color of his eyes, his hair ...



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*“We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being.”*

*~ Dr Maria Montessori*



*We thank the Montessori School of Tokyo and Violane Perrault, Toddler guide of the Bilingual Montessori School of Paris for their contributions to this handbook.*