

Montessori At Home Activity Booklet

Easy Ways to Introduce Montessori to Your Toddler

For Toddlers 18 months to 3 years old

"The child has a different relation to his environment from ours... the child absorbs it. The things he sees are not just remembered; they form part of his soul. He incarnates in himself all in the world about him that his eyes see and his ears hear."

> Dr. Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind

Hello from HotH

Dear Parent,

A warm welcome from all of us at House on the Hill! We are a family-run, genuine Montessori school, committed to pursuing excellence in early childhood education.

We pride ourselves as a leading Montessori pre-school where each child's creativity and talents are nurtured in a socially aware, stimulating and warm environment. But Montessori practice shouldn't end when school ends – starting and continuing the Montessori approach at home is of great benefit to your child.

There are many benefits to the Montessori style of teaching. Every child is born unique and full of potential. Montessori practice gives them the gift of independence through structured freedom and by allowing to learn at their own pace. This in turn enables the child to learn and grow, unimpeded, encouraging discovery and development.

We love sharing tips with our parents about how to bring Montessori into their homes. We have collected a selection of Montessori at Home activities that you can use to help your child to develop better, instilling a habit of responsible freedom and social awareness that will stay with them for life.

Thank you for taking the time to read our little booklet. There is so much more that we would like to share. If you have found the tips here useful, please consider:

- <u>Signing up for our newsletter mailing list</u>
- Following us on Social Media
 <u>Facebook</u> / <u>Instagram</u>: @HouseontheHillSG

Warm regards, The HotH Team

How To Use This Booklet

All children, regardless of age, thrive in an environment where they are challenged. Having said that, it is important to strike a balance between challenging them and allowing them to develop at their own pace.

- Use this booklet as a guide. Trust your instincts about what is best for your child.
- Take some time to plan and get organised. This applies to setting the space up as well as before each activity.
- Let the child take the lead. Take this time to talk to your child and explore what is important to them at this moment. Perhaps they have an interest in cooking or making a film. What is interesting to them is what they will focus on, and truly want to learn. Observe them objectively and give them freedom to explore.
- Slow down. What's the rush? Plan activities for and with your child and these activities don't have to happen once. You can do them over and over again, children learn different things in each step. Practice makes perfect! Slowing down might also include lessening your reliance on digital devices. Take time to find joy in real life.
- Hands on learning in the home. Children like responsibility. They enjoy being involved in preparing food, setting the table, tidying up and more. Consider the child through their eyes the most mundane task for adults can be exciting for children, especially the younger ones. Surprisingly, one of the most favourite activities for little ones in our schools is washing their dishes after a meal! Don't be afraid to involve your children in daily life.

- You are the Guide and Not the Boss or the Servant. Give help when it is needed – but as little as possible. Let them help themselves, it is all part of the learning process.
- Be patient! It is not about perfection. Learning is a journey and mistakes are a part of it.
- **Don't praise.** This might seem counterintuitive but with time children find intrinsic joy in independent work. We avoid praising the child to prevent them from doing the activity only for our acknowledgment. In our Montessori practice we use encouragement, not praise, to build healthy self-esteem and habits in our children.

We are constantly updating our blog with information about Montessori practice and positive parenting. <u>Visit our blog here</u>!



HotH Montessori Prepared Environment

Creating the Ideal Space for learning in the home

If there is one Montessori term that you should know, it's the Absorbent Mind! The Absorbent Mind was Maria Montessori's most in-depth work on her educational theory, based on decades of scientific observation of children. This book helped start a revolution in education. Since then, there have been both cognitive and neurological studies that have confirmed what Maria Montessori knew decades ago.

At House on the Hill, all our classes are carefully and purposefully designed to help our children to develop well, based on Dr. Montessori's learnings.

Key Points that you should take from the Absorbent Mind are:

- The child gains knowledge from his environment they learn from the physical space around them, and they will mirror the language and movement of adults and children
- Starts with impressions being absorbed unconsciously
- At its peak receptivity during the preschool years
- Children do not need direct teaching in order to learn
- What the child takes in during the absorbent mind period is taken in effortlessly and remains as the foundation of their personality

We believe that with the right conditions, the full potential of a child can be realised. In order to achieve this, we must create the ideal learning environment for them. It needs to be structured by careful preparation, to aid the child's life and natural growth. How do you create this ideal learning environment at home?

If you think about what an ideal environment for you to work in is like, the same would apply for children. Peaceful, quiet surroundings enable concentration. A beautiful environment helps to motivate. A place that is orderly and tidy.

Here are our top tips for creating the ideal environment!

- Follow your child Observe your child's interest and development
- Invest in open shelves and baskets Create an organized and peaceful environment
- Choose some of your child's nicest toys Do they inspire and nurture?
 Which one sparks your child's imagination?
- Limit quantity of toys available for the child to select
- Natural Materials try to use materials that are beautiful and delicate to the touch
- A **home** for everything and everything in its place
- Accessible space giving children the opportunity to be independent in their own space
- Get support don't be afraid to ask for help! It could be from anyone at home who is actively participating in raising your child, other parents from the same school or from your child's class teacher



Toddler

Dr Maria Montessori wrote that a child "wants to acquire a knowledge of his own, to have experience of the world, and to perceive it by his own unaided efforts." A child needs independence and freedom in order to learn and grow, and it is our job to enable that independence and freedom in a safe and effective manner.

What does this mean in reality? It means that at this stage of development, you can now help your toddler with the hardest part of a task – not the whole task. Initiate verbal communication frequently. Ask questions, share concerns and observations.

This is the time to be consistent. Follow routines and clear sequences for each activity. Get your child involved in household chores. They can begin to learn to pour their own water, button their clothes, serve and feed themselves food, and more. These actions can be messy at times– it takes a while to master the complex motor tasks of pouring and scooping– but allowing the child to practice without interference is essential for their physical, social and emotional development.

It would be impossible to boil down all Montessori pre-school curriculum into this one booklet, but we hope that what you find in the following pages gives you a taste of this pedagogy. We have included some activities to aid in linguistics development, mathematics skills, grow practical life skills, increase motor skills and encourage children to care for the environment.

Try them out and remember, the most important part is to have fun with your child!



Sweep It Off

Care of environment exercises help to foster love for the environment, allow children to connect and engage with nature, and encourage the child to interact with the environment, exhibiting respect and love. Such exercises also help the child form a connection with their home environment, in which they find a personal responsibility towards it.

Child sized broom

Tray

What You Need

- Small dustpan and hand brush
- Jar of loose material to sweep such as confetti or coloured barley
- Removable tape to mark off an area on a hard floor

What To Do

- Bring the jar of loose material to the taped–off area (the taped–off square is large enough for the head of the broom). Say, "We're going to sweep into this square."
- Sprinkle some loose material around the square. Return the jar to the shelf.
- Retrieve the child-sized broom. Say, "Watch while I sweep it all up."
- Sweep the loose material into the square with slow strokes, going all the way around the square. Shake the broom over the square and ask, "Did I miss any?"

- Return the broom and retrieve the dustpan and hand brush.
- On your knees, sweep the material into the dustpan. Ask again, "Did I miss any?"
- Carry the dustpan with the brush across the front such that the material will not slide out.
- Invite the child to try.
- Brush the material out into a wastebasket. Return the dustpan and brush to storage.



Q Montessori Goals

This exercise uses learning how to sweep to build a sense of taking care of the environment. Children become aware of what to do when spills happen.

This also helps develop hand-eye coordination, motor skills, concentration, independence and it satisfies a child's need for order. As a bonus, it also promotes respect for the environment.

Cleaning Plants

We're great proponents of getting children out in nature and try to spend as much time outdoors as we can. However, sometimes going out isn't practical and this is a good exercise for helping children to get their dose of natural greenery, indoors!

What You Need

- Child–sized tray
- Sponge or cloth
- Soft brush

- Cotton wool
- Apron
- Small basin
- Pot of plant
- Small watering can / child sized pitcher

What To Do

- Bring materials to the table.
- Put on the apron.
- Spread out the table mat.
- With the duster, dust the leaves (hold the leaf in the left hand and the duster in the right hand)
- Dust the stems if needed.
- When finished dusting, pour a little bit of water into the bowl, take a cotton ball, dip it in the water, squeeze it out, and wash the leaves (hold the leaf in the left hand, and the cotton ball in the right).
- If the cotton puff is dirty, get a fresh one and continue.
- See if the plant needs water test the soil with fingers, if needed, use the watering can and water the perimeters of the pot.

- Begin clean up: Take the duster outside or to the garbage and shake it out.
- Empty the bowl of the water and dry it with the sponge.
- Throw out the cotton balls that were used.
- Replace the materials back on the tray.
- End the work cycle by rolling up the mat.



Montessori Tips

Help your child to learn how to care for the space around them with this activity. Show them how to lightly and gently wipe the dust off the leaves of the house plant.

A young child will enjoy the satisfaction of seeing the bright green blades reveal themselves once that layer of grey dust is wiped off with a small cloth or sponge.

Through this delicate task, your child will hone their concentration and ability to focus. They will learn how to exercise self-control when they see how harsh movements might otherwise damage the plant. They will begin to understand the plants are living beings, which fosters that greater sense of respect for the natural world.

An added bonus: this activity is also a great way for children to learn new vocabulary about botany, such as the many different parts and species of plants!

Locks and Keys

Opening and closing items are amazingly popular with children and are wonderful preliminary practical life exercises for eye-hand coordination as well as developing concentration and a sense of order. This is a very popular activity in school and can easily be replicated at home!

What You Need

- Tray or basket
- Table mat
- Small bowl
- 3 locks and keys (different sizes)

What To Do

- Set the table mat and place the tray in front of mat.
- Arrange the locks on the mat under the basket.
- Take the first lock and select one of the keys from the basket. See if the key works with the lock. If it does, unlock the lock and leave the key in place. Set the lock back in its spot on the mat.
- Continue until all of the locks have been matched with their keys and unlocked.



Q Montessori Tips

This is a wonderful way to refine a child's hand-eye-co-ordination, fine motor skills and pincer grip, concentration. It develops the child's independence, satisfies the child's need for order and prepares the child for the directionality necessary for language and mathematics.

Opening and Closing

Opening and closing items are amazingly popular with children and are wonderful preliminary practical life exercises for eye-hand coordination as well as developing concentration and a sense of order.

What You Need

- Box / basket
- Table mat

 Selection of 4 - 6 different types of bottles with matching top

What To Do

- Set the table mat and place the box/basket in front of mat.
- Take out the bottles, one at a time and randomly placing them on the table mat in a row from left to right.
- Select the first bottle on the left hand and begin to twist open the lid using the pincer grip (the thumb, pointer and index finger).
- Put the bottle down and place the lid randomly in front of the bottles. Continue with the rest.
- After removing all the lids, pause, make a visual comparison of the lids and pick out the right-sized lid to close the bottle.



- To close the bottle, use the pincer grip to turn the lid in a clockwise direction.
- Continue to close all bottles.
- Put all the closed bottles back on the tray by carefully picking one bottle at a time, working from left to right.
- Complete the cycle of activity by folding the mat.
- Invite child to try out the activity.

Variation

Boxes of various sizes (with and without flaps)

Montessori Tips

Don't forget to slow your movements and avoid talking. Simply demonstrate to the child what you would like them to do.

This is a wonderful way to refine a child's hand-eye-co-ordination, fine motor skills and pincer grip, concentration. It develops the child's independence, satisfies the child's need for order and prepares the child for the directionality necessary for language and mathematics.

What's That Flavour?

Gustatory Sense is the scientific word for sense of taste. Different parts of our tongue are able to detect a particular taste. In this activity, the children will explore their sense of taste by trying different foods.

What You Need

- 4 clean dishes
- Items that are sweet, salty, sour and bitter
- Suggestions: Honey (sweet); Cheddar Cheese (Salty); Lemon Quarters (Sour); Dark Chocolate (Bitter)

What To Do

- Place 4 items on dishes.
- Introduce the items one at a time.
 For example: "This is honey."
 After your child has tasted it, say, "This is sweet!"
 Have your child repeat after you.
- Repeat the steps till all the items have been tasted.



Ontessori Tips

You may wish to repeat the exercise using different items.

Do the above exercise with your child's eyes closed and let him/her tell you the name of the taste.

Have different kinds of items and get him/her to categorise under the respective tastes.

DIY Montessori Smelling Bottles

A fun way to explore the sense of smell using everyday ingredients! Smelling bottles are a standard material in the Sensorial area of a Montessori classroom. The purpose is for the child to develop their sense of smell. The process is simple - the child sniffs their way through the bottles trying to match identical scents.

What You Need

- 4 small dishes
- Small piece of ginger (uncut)
- Small piece of garlic (uncut)
- Small piece of onion (uncut)

What To Do

- Cut a small piece of ginger, garlic and onions and place them in separate dishes. Then smash a few peppercorn / sprinkle a small amount of pepper in a dish.
- Place the dishes in a row.
- Place the uncut ginger, garlic and onion and the bottle of pepper below the dishes in a row in random.
- Pick the item from the first dish for your child to smell it.
- Find the matching smell from the bottom row.
- Repeat the exercise until all the items in the dishes have been matched with the items in the bottom row.



Q Montessori Tips

This activity is good way to explore our sense of smell and learn to differentiate the smell in their surroundings. The ability to smell is important as it is closely linked to our ability to taste. Smells can also evoke particularly memories and emotions, hence it can calm or excite us as well. This activity can also be replicated with flowers, herbs, etc.

Practical Mathematical Skills at Home

Maria Montessori used her understanding of child development to design a philosophy for teaching math to the young child. Montessori math is very hands on, with children using concrete materials to learn mathematical concepts.

It is quite difficult to recreate the Montessori curriculum at home without the materials. But, your child can still have real, fun and concrete experiences with numbers every day!

Children are exposed to numbers and math in their daily lives. Help them to love math by establishing familiarity with numbers. They could be on calendars, clocks, and other daily objects, or hear adults discussing money or how many of something exists.

Having a certain level of familiarity with numbers helps children be more successful in the classroom. It gives them confidence and prevents what so many children believe, that they're "not good at math".

Here are 11 ways to bring math into your everyday interactions with your child:

1. During mealtime

Make math fun and social! Introduce it at mealtimes. Some example conversation ways to do this would be to say something like "I ate one apple and now there are only two left.", "If you get the two blocks from the shelf, then we will have five altogether." "I need two more plates to set the table."

2. Measure things

Children love to measure things with a tape measure or ruler. They may or may not be able to read the numbers on the tape but can enjoy the process of discovering the longest or shortest.

Measure your child's height and show them the numbers on the tape measure. Let them have a turn and help her measure the height of their favourite soft toy. What else can they measure in the house?

3. Identify shapes

Help children to learn to count or identify shapes easily through books, songs, and everyday games or activities.

4. Supermarket shopping

Enlist your child to help you count out the things you need at the supermarket. For example, "We need eight potatoes, can you help me count and get eight of them?"

5. Follow a recipe

Cooking with your children can help discourage picky eating, and it is also a great opportunity to practice mathematics with children of all ages!

For children learning to count, "playing" with their food can be a fun way to practice. Help your child follow a simple recipe where the ingredients keep their shape (for example, cherry tomatoes retain their form, whereas cups of flour blend together in the bowl). For snack, they can count out a set number of fruits to make a fruit salad. For dinner, they can make their own pizzas and top it with a specific number of mushrooms, capsicum, or whichever ingredients you have on hand!

The kitchen is full of math, and children are happy to learn in such an engaging and delicious way. Plus, they'll be happy to eat their vegetable-full creations!

6. Let them pay

If your child is a little further along with math, let them help you pay when you run errands. Show them how to figure out which coins you need and put them in charge of a little coin purse for small purchases.

You might want to start with a low-pressure situation like paying for lunch, as it will likely take them a while at first and a long line of people waiting for them to finish at the grocery store may be too much pressure.

7. Play a game

Many games children love include numbers. Try Simon Says ("Simon says jump three times") or Hide and Seek ("Count to 50 before you look for me").

Many board games also include counting spaces. You could even make your own board game together, writing out the numbers on the spaces and using stickers to signify the meaning of different spaces for added fun.

8. Create a road trip game

Ask your child to count how many stop signs or how many blue cars they can see while you're travelling. Hopefully this will also keep you from counting the number of times you hear, "Are we there yet?"

9. Think out loud

We use numbers all of the time in everyday life, but it's often automatic and done all in our head so our children have no idea.

Try to notice when you're counting or doing a calculation in your head and say it out loud instead. Even if your child is too young to understand what you're talking about, you're getting them used to the language of math.

10. Read and sing about numbers

Read books with numbers, but don't use it as a chance to turn it into a quiz. That takes away the fun and make them feel the pressure.

When they recognize the numbers, they may just shout them out on their own, but otherwise just read the book and know that you're increasing their familiarity with numbers every time you do.

There are also so many fun children's songs that involve counting. Some of our favourites are Over in the Meadow, 5 Green and Speckled Frogs, and One Grey Elephant Balancing etc.

11. Play with patterns

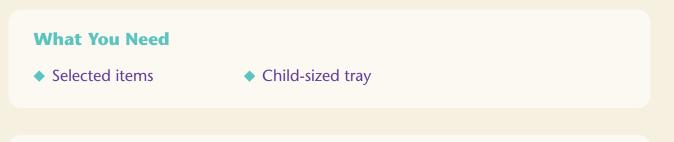
Pattern play is a great way to indirectly prepare children for math. You can use tangrams and take turns making patterns or make patterns with stickers or by stringing beads.



I Spy!

This is a fun and relaxing sound game to help children become familiar with the sounds that letters make. The 'I Spy Game' is an excellent tool to help make children aware that words are made up of individual sounds.

I Spy can be played at a level suited to the child. To begin with it's easiest to play while at home on a tray or workmat. Later the game can be played anywhere, waiting rooms, markets or casually while out driving in the car. Start with one object and work from there.



What To Do

Since the beginning sound is the easiest sound to identify, we start with identifying the initial sounds first.

- Select some objects and place it on the tray in front of you and the child.
- Make sure the child is aware of the correct names of the objects and/or shapes on the tray.

If you're not certain they know the names of the objects, then point them out one at a time and ask the child what it's called.

If a child is just beginning this work, then you can emphasize the beginning sound when you point to it. (i.e. "This is a frog - fff - frog. Once you're satisfied the child knows the names of the objects move on to the next step.)

• Look at the tray and silently select an object.



- Say to the child, "I spy with my little eye something that starts with the sound _" and then fill in the blank with the beginning sound of one of the objects (i.e. 'f' for the frog). Be sure to clearly articulate only the first sound of the word.
- If the child guesses incorrectly point to the object they chose (i.e. muffin) and say, "Muffin starts with the sound 'mmm'. I spy an object that starts with the sound 'f'. Do you see something that starts with the sound f?"

• If the child guesses correctly then you can move on to another object.

Other descriptions

"I spy with my little eye something that is..."

- a colour (i.e. "...something that is red")
- a shape (i.e. "something that is a square")
- something you can eat, play with, cook with, something alive, etc.

After the child is continually successful you can attempt ending sounds - this is much more difficult!

Montessori Tips

It's a good idea to use objects that the child is already familiar with. We find that model animals, toys and everyday household objects work very well.

Try to clearly articulate your sounds.

You may like to take turns with the child. Once they know how to play the game they may like to be the one who says "I spy with my little eye something that begins with _" and you have to be the one to guess the object.

Play this as a game! It is fun and both the child and the parent should enjoy playing it!

Raspberry And Banana Ice Cream

Two areas we take very seriously at House on the Hill are Montessori and nutritious food, so any time we can combine them and share with parents we are pretty excited!

Having healthy snacks available for children builds healthy eating habits from a young age, and having children help you prepare the snacks is at home Practical Life work! These snacks are great for after school, or even as an activity to do during a playdate.

What You Need

- ♦ 1–2 cups of frozen raspberries
- 2 frozen bananas
- Greek yogurt

- Blender
- Ice cream scoop
- Optional: 2-4 tablespoons of milk

What To Do

- Remove the frozen fruit from the freezer and let it sit at room temperature about 10-15 minutes.
- Add all the ingredients to your blender and start the blender.
- Continue until everything is well blended. You may need to add 2-4 tablespoons of milk if the fruit is frozen solid.
- Scoop the mixture into bowls and eat immediately.



OR

- Scoop mixture in a container, cover with plastic wrap and the container cover. The plastic wrap helps to keep some of the ice crystals from forming.
- Freeze for three to six hours.
- Enjoy!

Operation Montessori Tips

Focus on just one step at a time, and if your child does not know how, begin by doing the action slowly and quietly and letting them observe, and then give them the opportunity to do it on their own.

You can help when they are in trouble and then enjoy the finished product together! And remember, they can help clean the bowls when you are all finished!

Foam Dough

It's so fluffy! This is a super easy way to develop a toddler's sense of touch and smell. Have fun bending and massaging the foam dough into all sorts of shapes!

What You Need

- 2 cups of shaving foam
- 1 cup of corn starch

- Mixing bowl and spoon
- Different coloured food colouring

What To Do

- Measure out 2 cups of shaving cream and pour it into the mixing bowl. Add 1 drop of food colouring and mix. Put in 1 cup of corn starch to thicken the foam. Play with the mix and find your favourite consistency.
- Now it's time to get your child's hands in the bowl and knead the foam play dough.
- Continue to make a few more using different coloured food colouring.

Montessori Tips

This activity is designed to refine a toddler's tactile system, the scientific word for the sense of touch. The input from this system comes from the skin. The sensory receptors in our skin send messages to our central nervous system so that we are able to process and interpret this incoming information. This includes temperature, texture, pain, pressure, and traction. Is the item safe to touch? What does it feel like?

Young children learn and gain important knowledge about their surroundings by exploring the world around them. Tactile learning provides activities that stimulate their sense of touch and spark curiosity for further discovery learning.

Tip: this can get messy so play outdoors, in the bath or with lots of protective sheeting! Plan for some waterplay or bath time fun after.

Dot, Dot, Dots Galore!

Yayoi Kusama

A Japanese artist who is sometimes called "the princess of polka dots". Although she makes lots of different types of art – paintings, sculptures, performances and installations – they have one thing in common, DOTS! Now you can make your own masterpiece filled with dots, circles, rings and variety of round prints of bright and vivid colours!

What You Need

 Paper plate (alternative: circle-shaped paper/cardboard), paint brush, random items you can use to create circle/dot prints: toilet paper, Lego blocks, bottle caps, jar lids, bubble wraps, colourful circle cut-outs using magazines or dots stickers

What To Do

- Paint, draw, stamp/print, stick, paste more circles and dots!
- Fill your paper with contrasting colours
- Think of a title for your creation!



Montessori Tips

Focus on the PROCESS of making art, rather than the final product. This allows the child to experience the sensorial element of art without the expectation of creating something recognizable.

Teach your child how to use the materials properly and take care of them, especially how to clean and put everything away.

Show by example – paint alongside your child and have a fun discussion about what you're doing at the same time. What colours are you using? How many circles are you drawing!

Founded in 2012, House on the Hill is a family-run school. We are a house of curated learning, a genuine Montessori. We believe in immersing the child in an open and stimulating environment with a curriculum of experiential learning. This allows each child to develop life-long skills for their futures successes, at their own pace.

Here are 5 things you should know about us:

Genuine Montessori

We stay true to the values and education excellence of the Montessori method. Our specially-trained Montessori educators help to ensure our curriculum instils strong language and mathematical skills, preparing each child for their next step in either local or international schools. House on the Hill is one of a few Montessori pre-schools with individualised curriculum, vertical – learning, and 3-hour work cycle classes.

Life is an Adventure

To build critical thinking skills and creative independence, we create and weave in experiences that help with fostering a lifelong love of learning. Children at House on the Hill are imbued with a lasting sense of positivity to seize every moment of life.

Prepared Environment

From large green spaces to the cozy, wood-filled classes, our spaces are warm, inviting and purposefully built to be safe, accessible and to subtly nurture sensorial and motor skill development.

Nutrition

We are what we eat and this is doubly so for children. Our menu has been developed in collaboration with "The Food Doctor" Ian Marber, an internationally-renowned expert on diet and nutrition, using only the highest quality produce and no added salt or sugar to create well-balanced and nutritious meals for our growing children. This allows them to concentrate better and learn more actively.

Close Relationships with our Parents

We believe in being a pillar of support for parents. Regular and specific feedback is provided often to optimise each child's individualised curriculum. Our Parents-Teachers Association is highly engaged and parents are invited to participate in school activities on a regular basis. Bringing up your child is a team effort and everyone who joins us becomes part of the HotH family, both child and parents alike!

To find out more about House on the Hill or to book a visit, please click here <u>houseonthehill.com.sg/welcome</u>



LOCATIONS

Mount Sophia

33 Mount Sophia Singapore 228481

Balmoral

2H Balmoral Crescent Singapore 259887

Pasir Panjang

396 Pasir Panjang Road #02-01, Singapore 118733

CONNECT WITH US

houseonthehill.com.sg
f @houseonthehillsg

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please check out our blog for more Montessori at Home activities and information about Montessori

houseonthehill.com.sg/news-events