

April 6, 2020



FCMS PRIMARY

Weekly Care Package

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Activities to do at Home

Working outside



Art activities can easily be brought out into the sunshine for your child. These activities can be modified to fit into the outdoor space that you have available at your home, or for taking to a nearby greenspace if you have limited yard space.

Set up a child size easel with paper, brushes and paint. Include a bucket with a sponge and water for cleaning up, as well as a place to hang finished work to dry (a clothesline with clothespins works great for this). Demonstrate to your child how to keep the paint on the paper, as well as how to clean up the work when finished (see “Preliminary Activity” and “Banana Slicing” above for details about how to model these steps in an intentional way). Step back and observe how your child hones their large and fine motor skills and their artistic sense.

Don’t have an easel or large paper? Tape sheets of scrap paper, cardboard or old paper grocery bags together to the side of the house or garage to make a large canvas for your child. Save dried artwork to be repurposed for additional open ended play or cut the larger pieces of paper up to use for other art projects such as collage. **Don’t have paint brushes or paint readily available?** Try using kitchen tools (pastry brushes, sponged brushes used for cleaning) and simple water to paint on rocks or concrete. You can also try different mediums at the easel: watercolor paints, crayon, charcoal, etc.

You’d be surprised what children come up with once they are given the tools and the opportunity to work creatively!

Activities to do at Home

From the Shelf: *Watering a Plant*

This is a simple way that even the youngest of children can help care for living things at home.

YOU WILL NEED:

- A vessel for pouring water
- A plant in a pot
- A saucer underneath the pot to catch water
- A nearby basket of spill cloths to clean up spills!

(In lieu of a watering can, a small pitcher or even a teapot without a lid will do!)

Remember, *you* decide how much water will be part of this activity by choosing the size of the vessel. Indoor watering might be most successful with a small pitcher. Outdoor watering may lend itself well to a large, heavy can!



Activities to do at Home

From the Shelf: *Watering a Plant*

Other plant care activity ideas:

- Research and illustrate all of the plants you have growing in your yard!
- Name all the plants that are in your house; play Spoken Language games based on these plants
- Illustrate all the different leaf shapes you can find both inside and outside
- Collect leaves from outside and use them to make an art project
- Arrange flowers
- Wash the leaves of a plant using cotton balls or cotton rounds
- Plant seeds
- Scatter wildflower seeds
- Use a large, heavy watering can for outdoor watering
- Propagate houseplants



More plant care ideas [here](#)

Envisioning a New Routine/ The Home Work Cycle

Functional Independence

Many of the questions we've gotten so far have been around balancing independent play and work time with adult-directed activity. How much should we expect children to play on their own, and how much should we be directing their activity?

Anytime you are doing something *for* the child, stop and ask yourself "why" and how you can make it accessible for the child to succeed. Remember that the child's **developmental goal** from 3-6 years of age is *functional independence* -- or building the capacity to function independently in their world.

I often hear parents say "It takes my child *forever* to get their backpack on / tie their shoes / get out the door." So many parents find themselves wrapped up in the world of efficiency and abandon the child's need to do things at their pace. What a *beautiful gift* that during this time that we are confined to our homes we have nowhere to be and no strict time constraints. **Give your child the space and time to function independently.** Each day allow your child to get fully ready for the day on their own. Maybe your child needs a visual chart to be successful (a visual reminder of all the steps of getting ready to start the day or of the schedule for the day). When you're going on your daily walk, allow your child the time and space to put on his or her shoes independently. You can say, "We'll go on a walk as soon as your shoes are on. Come find me when you're ready!"

Envisioning a New Routine/ The Home Work Cycle

What defines a work cycle?

This three hour period is uninterrupted and defined by **freedom within limits**. Children freely choose work from materials displayed on open shelves. Children are free to work with a material for as long as they'd like. When they are finished, they put the material back. The child has freedom to choose, within limits set by the adult and supported by the physical environment.

The **Three Part Work Cycle** is unique to Montessori and includes the gathering, using, and putting away of any material or toy.

A silver lining of this time at home may be that we can allow children more time and space to enter a deep flow state without the schedule of a typical day disrupting them.

The Home Work Cycle

Parameters in the classroom:

- The adult curates the environment and decides what and how much is on the shelf.
- A child may choose any material she has had a lesson on when she sees it on the shelf.
- She may work with it for as long as she would like
- When she is finished, she will put it back where she found it
- *If another child is using it, it is not yet available*
- *If she has not yet been shown how to use it, it is not yet available. “Yes, you’re interested in the Pink Tower. You haven’t had that lesson yet. Someday!”*

Possible parameters for home:

- The adult curates the environment and decides what and how much is on the shelf.
- A child may choose any toy/activity that she sees on her shelf.
- She may work with it for as long as she would like
- When she is finished, she will put it back where she found it
- *If a sibling is using it, it is not yet available.*
- *If it is not on her shelf, it may not be available to her. “You’re interested in my computer. You can choose from your shelves.”*
- *Trust that your children can handle this. “Yes, you want to use the blocks, and your sister has them. She will put them back when she’s finished.”*

Self Care for Parents

Self Care for Parents: Balancing schedules and expectations

How much time should our child be working or playing independently, and how much of their time should be adult-directed?

How do we balance our own schedules and needs with those of our children?

What is expected of us as adults during this time?

How can we feel “productive” when we are doing “nothing?”

What if it takes our child “forever” to choose an activity, or they complain that they are “bored?”

Janet Lansbury, [“Kickstarting Your Child’s Learning and Play At Home”](#)

Spoken Language: Song

The Helping Song

Agatha Fry, she made a pie,
And Christopher John helped bake it.
Christopher John, he mowed the lawn
And Agatha Fry helped rake it.

Now Zachary Zug took out a rug
And Jennifer Joy helped shake it.
Jennifer Joy, she made a toy,
And Zachary Zug helped **break it**.

Now some kind of help
Is the kind of help,
That helping's all about.
And some kind of help,
Is the kind of help
We all could do without!



Click the image to see a video!

Spoken Language: Poem

The Caterpillar Collected by Marc Brown

A caterpillar crawled to the top of a tree.
“I think I’ll take a nap,” said he.
So- under a leaf he began to creep
To spin a cocoon;
Then he fell asleep.

All winter he slept in his cocoon bed,
Till Spring came along one day and said,
“Wake up, wake up, little sleepyhead.
Wake up, it’s time to get out of bed.”
So- he opened his eyes that sunshiny day.
Lo! He was a butterfly- and flew away!



Spoken Language: Grace and Courtesy

Grace and Courtesy: Accepting/Denying Company

Navigating social situations during this time can be challenging and seem more frequent. Many of us are at home, spending more time with family members than usual. ***Expressing your needs in a true, kind, and brief way will keep you feeling healthy and happy.***

By acting out these Grace and Courtesy lessons with someone for your child(ren), you can provide them with social tools to maintain their health and happiness too. Here are Grace and Courtesy lessons on how to accept/deny company while you are doing something.



Denying Company



Accepting Company

Spoken Language

The Sound Game:

The Sound Game is the foundation for the child's understanding of the sounds of spoken language, and the key to understanding language on a written level. The Sound Game supports the child's awareness of all sounds within words and their ability to articulate and pronounce those sounds accurately. Children at any level of phonetic awareness can (and should!) play the Sound Game regularly.

Remember that children learn the *phonetic and phonogram* sounds of words in the classroom, *not the name of the letter* (although many children come to learn both the sound and the name of the letter). The Sound Game is played using only the *sounds* within the word or object.

To play:

Gather 8-10 objects from around your home. The objects should include a variety of sounds, including a few pairs of objects that begin with the same sound but end with a different sound (ie “**stapler**” and “**spoon**”).

Name the objects that you have gathered. Proceed with the Sound Game (**Watch video on next slide for how to play each level**). You can start with Level 1 if you have a younger child, and progress to the next level as the child gains confidence. If your child is on Level 1 or 2, stay there and repeat until they are proficient.

Spoken Language

The Sound Game (continued)

Level 1: One object, focus on the beginning sound only (“banana”, “thread”)

Level 2: Two objects that begin with the same sound and end with a different sound; focus on the beginning sound and ending sound only (“rock” and “rubberband”)

Level 3: Same as Level 2, but this time ask if the child hears any sounds in the middle of the word (“rubberband”)

Level 4: Same as Level 2, but this time ask the child to put all the sounds in the word together in order (“b-r-u-sh, brush”)

If your child answers incorrectly: If a child names the incorrect object, or doesn’t know the answer, we don’t correct them or call them out on the error. We simply isolate the object (place the object in your hand or separate from the other object) and ask the question again. If the child still does not answer correctly, the adult can name the correct object and move on.



Click the video above to watch the Sound Game!

With Gratitude



Thank you, everyone, for your thoughtful questions and comments and your commitment to your children.

Please remember to email us photos of how your child is working, playing, and learning at home during this time so we can share on our social media page.

We are still a connected community during this time!

“Mothers, fathers, politicians: all must combine in their respect and help for this delicate work of formation, which the child carries on in the depth of a profound psychological mystery, under the tutelage of an inner guide.”

-Dr. Maria Montessori