

Toddler Newsletter

March 17, 2020



Baking With Toddlers

Hi Toddler Families! We miss everyone so much already. We hope these ideas will add a little fun Montessori to your day. Since we're all at home, it's a great time to incorporate food prep with toddlers!

Here are two bread recipes (one with yeast and one without), along with a few links to other recipes. Baking with toddlers can be a little messy, but they love it so much and the mess can mean some practical life cleaning up after! Involve your child in the measurements as much as possible to introduce basic math (this is one cup, this is one half cup, etc.) Let them scoop, add, and knead!

Basic Yeast Bread

Prep Time: 1 hour 20 mins

Cook Time: 25 mins

Total Time: 1 hour 45 mins

Ingredients

3 cups all-purpose flour (separated into 1 cup and 2 cups)

1/4 cup sugar

1 packet yeast (or 2 1/4 teaspoon)

1 cup warm water

1/4 cup butter, melted

1 teaspoon salt

Toileting At Home

by Rachel Regan

A Toddler is constantly at work, whether they are working on gross-motor skills, language skills, or even self-care independence!

Dressing and toileting can seem like daunting tasks, but each toddler is at a sensitive period for learning these things. While you and your child find ways to continue learning from inside your house, another great way to utilize your time is to start the toileting process! Consistency is key, and what better way to provide that consistency than during these three weeks? Here are some tips for getting started:

1) Have your child wear underwear. Pull-ups and diapers are created for absorbency, and do not allow your child to feel if they are wet. When a child wears underwear, they are able to develop the brain/body connection to better listen to their bodies. There will be accidents at first. It is all part of the process.

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Instructions

- Combine 1 cup of the flour plus all the sugar and yeast in a bowl.
- Add warm water. (It should be about the temperature of your bath water.)
- Set on a warm counter for 10 minutes. When the yeast mixture looks puffy, add 1 cup of flour plus the teaspoon of salt and melted butter.
- Stir. Add last cup of flour and stir again. Your dough will be VERY STICKY.
- Pour 1/4 cup of extra flour on a cutting board or clean countertop then put the dough on top.
- Knead the dough with hand for 10 minutes. Press down with the heel of your hand, then fold the dough in half. Press down again, fold. Repeat.
- When the dough changes from sticky to silky, place it in a greased loaf pan.
- Lay a clean towel over the loaf pan and set it in a warm spot. Allow the dough 45 minutes to rise. Punch it down and let it rise for 10 more minutes.
- While it's rising again, preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Bake at 375 degrees F for 25 minutes.

Toileting At Home Continued

2) Have your child go to the bathroom every 20-30 minutes. Start a timer on your phone, and when it goes off, tell your child (do **not** ask) that it is time to use the toilet. If you ask a Toddler if they want to try the toilet, they often will say "no." Just make it a simple statement: "It is now time to try the toilet." You could try counting to 10 or singing a favorite song while they sit on the toilet.

3) If your child has an accident, calmly take them to the bathroom, have them change their own clothes, and sit on the toilet. If a child has a BM accident, do get involved in the cleanup. Simply and calmly state, "Pee/poop goes in the toilet."

Toileting can seem stressful and daunting, but it does not have to be. With preparedness and a calm attitude, it can be a breeze! Remember, toileting is a process, and if your child does seem to have mastered it, accidents every now and then are normal. If you have any questions at any point, please feel free to reach out to the Toddler Team. We're happy to help!



Savory or Sweet Quick Bread from bakerbettie.com

Ingredients for Savory Bread

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tbsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
3 large eggs, room temperature
1 1/2 cups milk or buttermilk, room temperature
6 tbsp. canola oil (or any other oil or liquid fat)
Spices or mix-ins as desired

Ingredients for Sweet Bread

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tbsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
3 large eggs, room temperature
1 1/2 cups milk
6 tbsp. canola oil (or any other oil or liquid fat)
1 1/2 cups granulated or brown sugar (or combination of both)
1/2 tsp. vanilla
Spices or mix-ins as desired

Instructions

- Preheat your oven to 350°F (177°C) and prepare a 9"x 5" loaf pan with pan spray or lined with parchment paper and set aside.
- In a large mixing bowl whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, and any other spices and herbs you might be using.
- In a separate mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, oil, sugar (if making sweet quick bread), and any other extracts or liquids you may be using.
- Pour the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients and using a spoon or a rubber spatula, stir the two together until combined. This will be a batter, not a dough. For the sweet quick bread, only stir until the flour is absorbed and then stop. The more you stir the more tough the bread can become. For the savory quick bread, it could benefit you to give it a good stir for about a minute to purposefully develop some of the gluten strands so that it has more of a bread-like texture to it once baked. If using any other add-ins such as cheese, berries, nuts, etc... fold them in now.
- Pour the batter into the loaf pan and bake at 350°F (177°C) for 40-45 minutes for the savory quick bread and 50-55 minutes for the sweet quick bread, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with moist crumb.

Savory Variations

Cheddar Bacon Chive Quick Bread: Cook 6 strips bacon until crispy & crumble. Fold in the bacon, 3 tbsp finely chopped chives, and 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese right before putting into the pan to bake.
.Sundried Tomato Basil Quick Bread: Add 1 tbsp dried basil into the dry ingredients. Fold in 1 cup roughly chopped sundried tomatoes right before putting into the pan to bake.

Sweet Variations

Double Chocolate Quick Bread: Add 1/4 cup cocoa powder (natural or dutch processed) into the dry ingredients. Fold in 1 cup chocolate chips into the batter right before putting into the pan to bake.
Cranberry Orange Quick Bread: Add 3/4 tsp orange zest & 2 tbsp orange juice into the wet ingredients. Fold in 1 cup of rough chopped fresh cranberries right before putting into the pan to bake.

Other Recipe Ideas

<https://rainydaymum.co.uk/cooking-with-toddlers-round-up/>

<https://www.mother.ly/child/montessori-at-home-15-kid-friendly-healthy-cooking-projects>



Quick At Home Montessori Toddler Work from Kristen

Don't worry if you don't have exactly the right materials. Just use what you have! A plate will do instead of a tray.



Simple slicing with a wavy chopper ([link here](#)) or a dull knife. You can do this with pickles, cheese, banana, or anything you have on hand!



Pouring water between two pitchers or small cups. You could use creamer pitchers or shot glasses.



Dry scooping transfer work. This would work with any two bowls, a small spoon, and cereal, rice, or beans (cereal is best for children who are still exploring by putting items in their mouths)

Easy Ways to Start Implementing Montessori Today

by Leslie Green



Practicing the Montessori method on your own can seem expensive, time consuming, and intimidating. You could definitely spend a chunk of time and money getting all the right materials, setting up your home just so, and reading all the right books. If you have the resources to do that, then I applaud and encourage you completely! But if you are busy and a little stretched on resources, here are some wonderfully simple ways to start implementing Montessori today.

1. Let Your Toddler Help Around The House

Toddlers are independence junkies. They want to do things for themselves, without adults, thanks-very-much. An easy way to assist this urge is to let them help with simple tasks around the house. Show them how to set the table, let them rinse the vegetables before a meal. If you don't want to or can't buy materials, get a broom with a wooden handle from a thrift store and saw off the handle until it's toddler sized. Show them how to fold laundry, feed pets, water plants and collect vegetables and fruits from your garden, or even help with the cleaning of your home (they can help with clean with plain water or vinegar diluted in water). Inviting toddlers to help not only builds their self esteem and confidence, but sends the message that they are a valued, important member of the household and community. I know it can seem crazy that young children enjoy work, but they truly do. That being said, this doesn't mean you need to implement a chore chart for your toddler or that they should be alongside you in every single household task. Just see what interests them and go with it. Typically they show interest in what adults are doing, but if they would rather do some art or build with blocks sometimes, those are important activities too.

2. Spend More Time Outside

Being in nature is so valuable for children. As long as the weather isn't extreme, children should spend some time outside every day. They can play in the rain, snow, mud, and sun as long as they are dressed appropriately (of course, if it is bitter cold or blisteringly hot, stay warm and cool and be mindful and adjust the time you spend outside accordingly). But most days, children can get outside. The natural world provides experiences that just can't be replicated indoors. Hearing real birdsong or flowing water, getting vitamin D from the sun's rays, observing animals, watching clouds, feeling the breeze. Even if you live in the city, try to spend some time outside with your child every day. If you take a daily walk and your child is in a stroller, that's great because you need exercise and time for yourself, but try to incorporate some unstructured time before or after for the toddler(s) to explore on their own. Let them pick up sticks, examine leaves, get dirty, and see clouds. Even better, take a meandering walk with them and let them set the pace. This is challenging, but you will be amazed at what they discover.

3. Slow Down

If you have a busy life, could set aside one day a week to simply slow down? Or even one hour per day? Time is a fantastic gift for toddlers. While errands and activities are essential and even beneficial in their own way, having some time at home or in a classroom for uninterrupted periods of concentration is special. Toddlers live in the moment. They don't understand that at 3:00 you have a dentist appointment, and then at 5:00 older brother has soccer practice, etc. See if you can schedule quality time with your toddler(s).

You could take a walk with no destination or time limit, do a baking or cooking project, or let them choose the activities. Even if you can't set aside a whole day, you can practice slowing down in daily situations. Instead of running around in the morning, shoving shoes and coats on, can you get up ten minutes earlier to let your toddler practice dressing him/herself and putting their own shoes on? Could you read books before bed slowly together? Could you do an art project while dinner cooks without any interruptions? Maybe there is just one area per day where you could slow down and that is valuable too.

4. Read More

Reading to children is an excellent pastime. It builds vocabulary and provides a time for snuggling and bonding. In addition to incorporating more reading, make sure your child sees you reading. This shows them that reading is important. Could you set aside ten minutes a day for "reading time" where you read a book and your child is expected to either read their own books or engage in another activity by him/herself?

A note about books for toddlers - toddlers can't distinguish between what's real and not real. They're still learning so much about the real world and they find it fascinating, so try to choose books that are based in reality. Books that seem dull to us are interesting to them. You don't have to have bears driving cars and monsters. Simple books with real pictures about everyday life are interesting to them! You can even make your own books with photographs if you're a go-getter.

5. Spend Time Observing

Engaging, teaching, and playing with toddlers is so fun. They have endless curiosity and delight for the world. It's tempting to constantly engage with them - singing songs, playing, answering questions. While those activities are all positive, it's also positive to simply sit and observe.

"Wouldn't that make me a bad parent?" Not at all. When we take time to sit and observe toddlers, we learn so much about them. We see how they are doing developmentally, which skills they have mastered, and which activities they are interested in. Observing is not sitting next to a toddler and talking while he/she completes an activity. It's sitting a little bit away from the toddler, maybe in a chair across the room, and watching without any sort of interruption. If your toddler is not used to you observing and constantly wants to engage, you could try holding a book and saying you are going to do some reading, but that they should go ahead and choose whatever they'd like to do. Or you could do start doing some dishes and then turn around and watch once they are engaged in an activity. Taking notes can be helpful while observing. You'll notice more and it can be fascinating to see what they can do on their own. It also builds the skill of self entertaining. I don't think parents or teachers should feel guilty if they are not entertaining children all the time. Entertaining yourself is a life skill. When we have to choose things to do for ourselves, we discover what we are interested in. If every minute of a toddler's day is scheduled (swim class, music class, library story time, playground, nap, etc.), then we can never observe what they truly enjoy doing. Sit and watch the toddler(s) in your care for just ten minutes a day, then go from there.

The Montessori method is intricate and detailed, but implementing it for toddlers doesn't have to be complicated. You don't have to be an expert on pedagogy or have a certification to practice anywhere, anytime!

And finally...

A few photos of your teachers with their pets! (Rachel does not have a pet, but we'll include a fun photo of her on Thursday!)



Kristen and Ike



Leslie and Robin Hood