

Toddler Newsletter

March 19, 2020



Homemade Play Dough Recipe

Ingredients:

1 cup of flour
1 cup of warm water
½ cup of salt
1 tbsp of vegetable oil
1 tbsp of cream of tartar (optional for improved elasticity)
Food coloring or essential oil of choice (lavender play dough smells great!)

Steps:

1. In a separate bowl, mix dry ingredients.
2. In a medium saucepan (non-stick preferable) mix water, oil and color/essential oil over very low heat.
3. Add dry ingredients and stir until combined and difficult to stir.
4. Turn off heat.
5. Lightly flour a cutting board.
6. Place play dough on the cutting board to cool a bit.
7. Gently knead the dough.
8. Allow to cool completely before using and storing.

This recipe makes a decent amount of play dough, so put only a bit of it out and keep the rest to replace the used play dough once it starts to look tired. Store in an airtight bag or container. Pull off pieces to keep in a jar your child can access, and have some cookie cutters available. If you don't have cookie cutters, the lid to a mason jar makes a great makeshift cutter. Have fun!



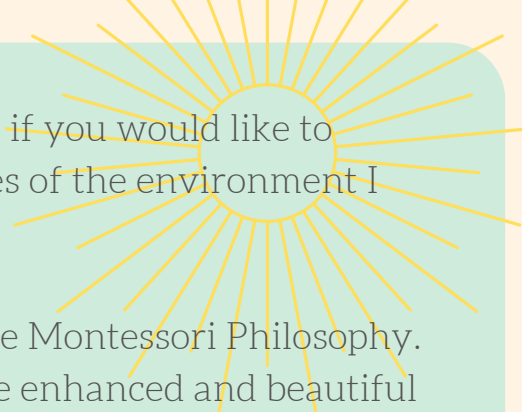
Setting Up a Montessori Playroom by Kristen

Our homes are our sanctuary and our place of comfort. Over the next few weeks most of us will be challenged to admire a home that we should not leave in order to be safe and keep others safe in our community. This togetherness that we are experiencing has us getting cozy but for some... that could mean boredom! All of the teachers at Children's Garden have been creating, collaborating and communicating about strategies to guide your wonderful children while nesting at home. Many of our families have a place designated for their children to explore and experience all of their play objects, toys, stuffed animals and games. This space can be a playroom, den, loft or even a corner of a room. It is very helpful to have a place where the children can do their own activities at their own pace, while being orderly and in sight of their parents!

Then, parents can get things done too! A great way to keep the play space attractive and consistently engaging is to employ some Montessori strategies.

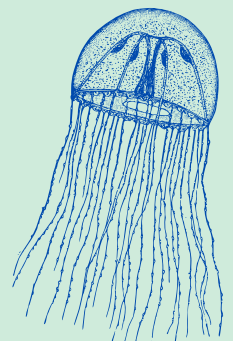
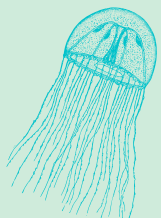
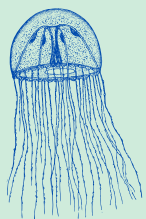
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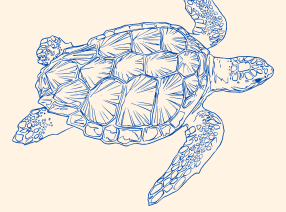
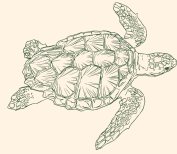
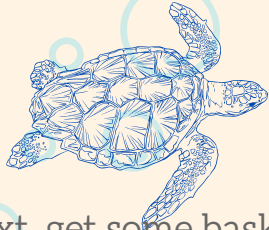
Below, I will show you some ideas to incorporate in your home if you would like to involve the Montessori Philosophy. Also, please see the pictures of the environment I created in my home.



I feel honored that I was given many pearls of wisdom from the Montessori Philosophy. When I have taught children over the years, I also gained more enhanced and beautiful concepts from my Montessori Toddler and Primary Certificates. This all assisted in guiding me in raising my wonderful girls! I found that when they were young, it helped me tremendously to set up an environment much like the one they had at school. The girls LOVED it! And I loved the ability to cook dinner or have an adult conversation while they were busy, engaged and happy too! The key components that I took from the Montessori Prepared Environment are making it child sized, simple, clean, attractive and contain stimulating materials. For the purpose of this article, I wish that I had more toddler sized furniture, but some of you may not have that either. So, I have gone around my home gathering items to create a “play nook” for toddlers!

First, get a few low shelves or benches. I had to take down the stackable shelves in the picture from storage in our basement. Place the shelves along a wall or sliding door with a rug in the center or take blue painter tape and tape where a rug would be placed. If you have child sized table and chairs, please place them in this area. This gives a place for the children to take their materials to work on. Or as I did in the picture, there is a basket of placemats that he/she can get out and bring to the large area rug and then get his/her material to take to the placemat. They are developing focus and concentration, as well as respect. If someone else is using the material, the child will know because it is on the table or on the placemat. Then he/she will have to wait and choose something else.



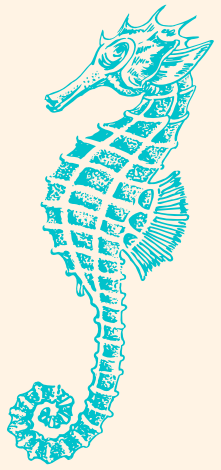


Next, get some baskets or trays. If you entertain, you can use serving trays, outside laminate plates and bowls, bread baskets or storage bins. After you have the trays, look around your home for items that your child plays with often. Are there special books, toys, or fun activities such as splashing in some water that you could create and put on the shelves? Take each item and put it in its own basket or on a tray. This allows you to isolate the object. It simplifies the task and allows children to focus on the concept rather than many things at once! Toddlers will gain the concept of the item quicker and enjoy the task if they have the time and space to concentrate. In the beginning of the school year, we do a lot of guiding to remind children to put their work away. This way they are completing the task and getting it ready for the next person. Also, they will always know where it is located! If you remind your child for a few days to put his/her material (we call it work or job at school) away, then in no time at all they will be doing it just like at school! We love to sit back and watch the hum of children working, putting their work away and then searching for a new work!

After a week or so, switch out the materials in the baskets. Over the years, I would keep toys and materials in bins in storage areas. Then you can just grab something from the bin and replace with one of the items on the shelves. This can be quite a process, so you can just gather other toys, etc. from around the house to switch out and put in this special Montessori space!

Remember, all of these items were found around the home. Setting up a space for your toddlers can help bridge the Montessori classroom and your home. I truly hope that some of you will have some fun times in your Montessori space! Here are some pictures of the space that I created in my home. I also created a video of my daughter utilizing the environment. I would be happy to send if you are interested. Please feel free to email with questions or comments!





Montessori MacGyver Colander Work by Rachel

There are some true Montessori materials we just cannot re-create, but if we look around our house, there are plenty of things we can turn into jobs for our children! In this series, we'll walk you through a step by step process of making your own materials from items found around your house! Recycle & Reuse! Get your child involved in the making process for more at-home fun!

Put and Take (Imbucare) Colander Edition:
Great for fine motor skill practice.

Items You Will Need:

1 colander

A bunch of pipe cleaners, straws, or take-out chopsticks.

How to Make It:

Place your colander on a tray.

Cut your pipe cleaners in half, or if using chopsticks, separate. Sand and smooth any rough edges on the chopsticks. Have a container for the pipe cleaners or chopsticks.

How to set up:

Take the colander and place it on a tray. To the left of the colander, place a container holding the pipe cleaners or chopsticks. Your child can then feed the pipe cleaner/chopstick through the holes on the colander. This aids in fine motor skill development and concentration.

** For a bigger challenge, take a piece of yarn or a shoelace and have them string it through the colander. If you do not wish to part with your colander, an old spice jar with holes at the top is also a great alternative. Unfortunately, only small pipe cleaners will fit in this, but if you have a bunch of pipe cleaners, it's a great way to use them!



Matching Language Cards by Leslie

Print two copies each of these photos (lamine if you can, or glue to construction paper or cardstock to make them sturdier). Place them in two separate containers, then on a plate/tray for an easy matching job! (They are also attached in the email if you want to resize.) I was supposed to go to the coast for Spring Break so I have the ocean on my mind!

Or create a matching realistic figurines to photos work. This brand has a lot of great options: Toobs ([click here for link](#))

Links to articles on how to set up these jobs:

[Matching Language Cards](#)
[Object to Card Matching](#)



Sea Turtle

Humpback Whale





Humpback Whale and
Calf



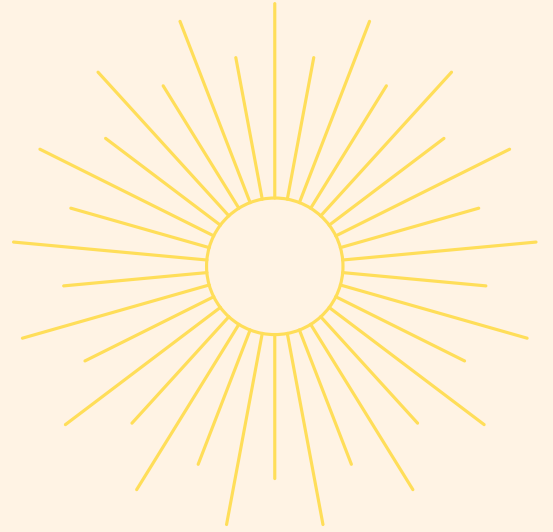
Baby Sea Turtle



Sea Horse

And finally...

a picture of Rachel and her partner, Nathan! Contrary to popular toddler lore, teachers do in fact leave school and don't live there. Here is proof!



And Rachel's embroidery project! Rachel likes to embroider at home (a toddler explanation: Rachel uses a needle and embroidery floss - which is like thick thread- to create decorations like flowers on this jean jacket!

