



MAY 13TH, 2020

TODDLER NEWSLETTER

TRANSITION TO PRIMARY: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW GROWTH

BY KRISTEN BLOMGREN

If I were to craft a story about the vision of the toddler environment in the spring, it would be a culmination of the year where we supported the union of the body and soul of the toddlers. This body and soul union is time when we are continuing to prepare the toddlers for the primary environment as we started from the beginning of the school year. The toddler teachers are guides to each child and we foster their social, emotional, neurological and physical growth of development. Since we are unable to be in the environment with each of your children, we thought we could provide a guideline for some of the changes to be expected when moving on to the primary program. Each primary classroom at Children's Garden follows the main guidelines for a Montessori Primary classroom. The basis of the guidelines for classrooms is respect for themselves, others and the environment. They do however have diverse prepared environments that lend to the uniqueness of each classroom.

The Montessori primary program allows children to choose work from self-correcting materials in which the child has received a lesson from the teacher. However, in the toddler environment the child can utilize any of the materials in the classroom. During the year, we began to encourage the older toddlers to ask for a lesson. We had some materials that were for a child who was close to the age of 3 years old and who was showing an interest in beginning to write. This activity was on a shelf and the children would need to ask to trace lines or tackle beginning name writing. All of the toddlers were asked to take their work to a table or to the rug, complete the material and then return it to its proper place on the shelf ready for the next child. Again, we started with building manipulatives activity. The child had to take the activity out and work with it on a small rug. This encourages the child to gain ownership of the material. This is an important part of primary where they take all materials to a table or rug after they have received a lesson, they complete the task and then return it in good order to its proper location.

Below, please find some differences your child will encounter in the when moving on to the primary program that will expand on their developmental growth:

PREPARING FOR PRIMARY

BY RACHEL REGAN & KRISTEN BLOMGREN

During this time of the school year, we are preparing many of our Toddlers for the world of Primary! It's a bittersweet time, filled with all of the nerves, excitement, happiness, and sadness that accompanies the end of the school year. Since we cannot be in person to support our transitioning Toddlers, we decided to compile a list of things we encourage in our friends to make their move to Primary a little smoother. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us

- **Toileting:** We encourage our toddlers to be fairly proficient with toileting. Accidents will happen, and often you will see your Toddler regress a little bit with toileting when they begin in Primary. Make sure they have a change of clothes, can dress themselves, and know they can ask for help when needed.
- **Dressing:** Toileting and dressing often go hand in hand. A lot more independence is required in Primary, and being able to change shoes, socks, clothes, and jackets/winter gear is important. Giving your child space and time to practice dressing when waking in the morning, going outside, and before bed aid in the development of these skills.
- **Meal Times:** Children at this age should be able to pour their own beverages, drink from an open cup, serve their own food, and use a fork and spoon. We have encouraged this in the toddler classroom through our snack procedures. These are simple skills to work on during meal times at your house!
- **Snack:** As with the toddler snack procedure, the child looks for a space at the snack table, they wash hands, get a plate and read the board about the appropriate amount of snack. The white board in the primary classes have a picture of the food, the word of the food and an amount that they are allowed to have of the food. For instance, it will say 2 scoops of goldfish. The drawn picture will show a scoop, number 2, a bowl with goldfish and then the word goldfish. They get a glass for water and refill a pitcher if the water is running low or gone. They then wash their dishes. This is a self-care activity in which they are becoming aware of being respectful that there is just enough snack for each child to have one serving. It also helps them with conservation and if they are still hungry there are food preparation activities.
- **Putting Things Away:** As many of you know, part of our work cycle is putting away the work we are done with. By this time of year, all of our students are fairly proficient at this skill, and is something that is ultra important in the Primary classroom. While this skill will not develop overnight at home, it is important to encourage it. Modeling the behavior of putting things away and a simple "Please put away item name before choosing your next work" is all we do in the classroom. With consistent reminders, you will see the behavior become second nature. It helps a lot if there is a designated spot for the items.

PREPARING FOR PRIMARY CONTINUED

- **Work Rugs:** Using a rug for a job is part of the work cycle process for children in Primary. The rug is usually rolled up and stored in an accessible basket. We encourage a child to retrieve a rug, unroll it, do their work on top of the rug, and then put the work away, return the work rug, roll it up and put it away.

HOW TO ROLL A RUG

Materials:

Small rug or placement.

Basket or container to hold the rug.

Steps:

- 1) Walk over to the basket of rugs.
- 2) Carefully pick up the rug with two hands.
- 3) Carry the rug to a spot where you can move around.
- 4) Using your fingertips, gently unroll the rug towards your body. Step back as you unroll it just enough so that the rug does not fall on your feet.
- 5) Use one hand to smooth out the rug.
- 6) Have a simple conversation about carrying the rug with 2 hands, that it is for work (or toys) and not our bodies.
- 7) Walk around the rug being careful not to step on it.
- 8) Bend down, using fingertips of both hands, start to roll up the rug evenly.
- 9) Gently pat it at the ends if it is not tight.
- 10) Use two hands to carry it back to the basket.

Variations/Options:

Use small rugs or placemat. Different styles of rugs like one with fringe.



SPONGE TRANSFER

Many primary classrooms have water materials that utilize sponges to clean spills.

Materials:

Tray with lip

2 identical bowls

Bowl on left ½ full of water

½ of a sponge

Steps:

- 1) Bring the tray with the bowls and sponge to a table.
- 2) With your dominate hand, demonstrate opening and closing.
- 3) Using your dominate hand, lift the sponge up and put it in the bowl with the water.
- 4) Look down at the sponge soaking up the water,
- 5) Let the sponge absorb as much water as possible.
- 6) Lift the sponge up and hold over the bowl on the right side.
- 7) Squeeze all the water out of the sponge and into the empty bowl.
- 8) Continue to transferring until all the water is in the bowl on the right.
- 9) Pause and look in the empty bowl.
- 10) Put the sponge in bowl on the right and begin to transfer all the water back to the bowl on the left side.
- 11) When all the water is back in the bowl on the left, place the sponge on the tray.
- 12) Offer to have your child try the activity.

Variations/Options:

Use colored water in the bowls. Most Primary teachers do not use any words while presenting materials in the Practical Life Area. They want the child to focus on the movements and not her language to help with order, concentration, coordination and independence. Try to not use any words too!



MONTESSORI MACGYVER: THREADING JOB

by Rachel Regan

There are some of those true Montessori materials we just cannot re-create, but if we look around our house, there are plenty of things we can turn into Montessori materials 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!

Threading: Fine Motor Skills

Items You Will Need:

- Plastic Grid Canvas (Found in embroidery section of art store)
- Blunt end needle
- Colorful yarn

How to Make It:

- Cut the plastic grid into smallish pieces- small enough for toddler hands but big enough for threading.
- Thread the blunt end needle with thread and tie a knot.

How to set up:

Remember, all of our work in the classroom is set up from left to right to mimic the way we read from left to right. So, place the threaded needle to the left of the grid. This is a fairly tricky job, but lots of older toddlers are capable of doing it with just a bit of modeling. Show your toddler how you can thread the needle in and out of the holes. There is no need to follow a pattern or be precise- it is just an exercise in fine motor skills, concentration, and creativity!



FOOD PREP: EGG PEELING AND SLICING

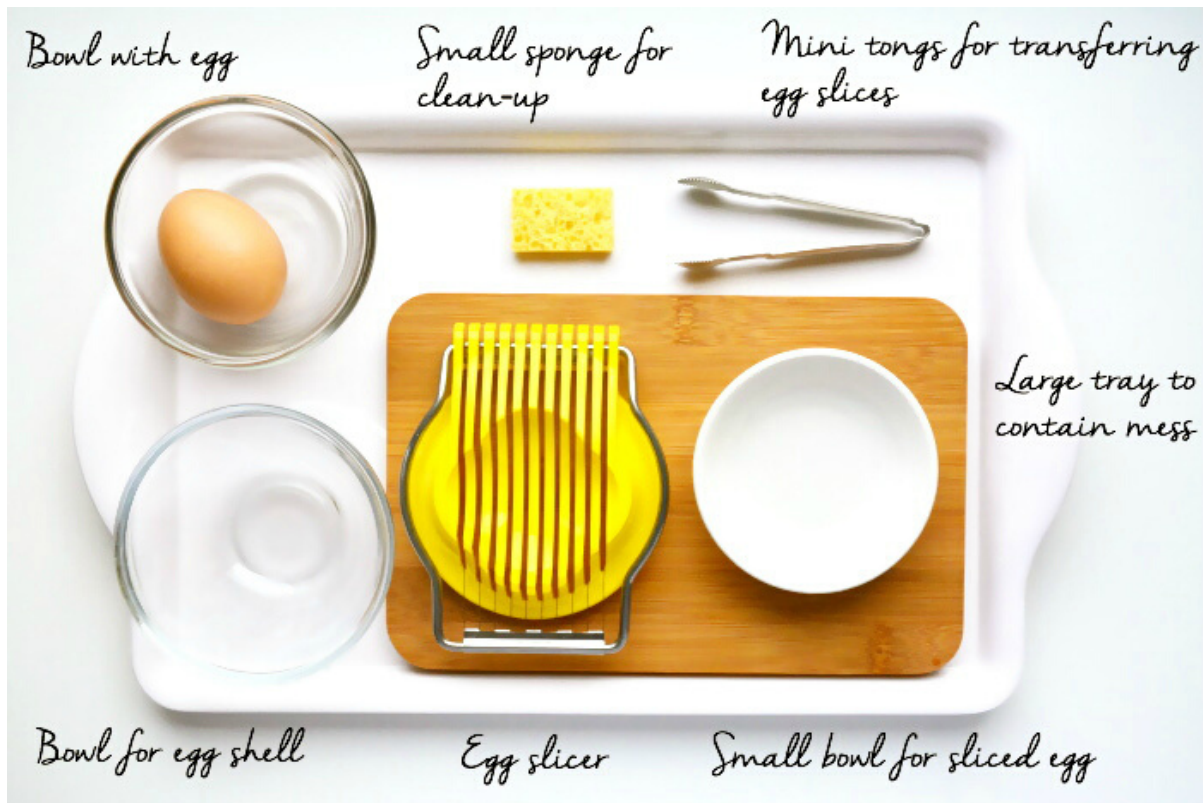
Materials:

- Tray with two bowls
- Egg slicer or child safe knife
- Hardboiled egg
- Dishwashing station for cleanup

Procedure:

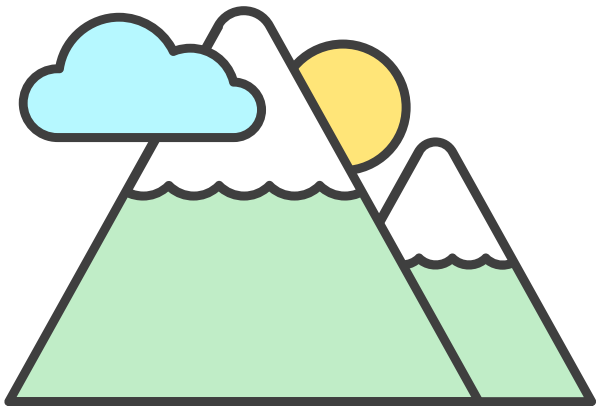
- 1) Wash hands
- 2) Set the tray up from left to right as best you can with: Hard boiled egg in bowl, empty bowl, and egg slicer. A small cutting board is nice as well if you have one.
- 3) Take egg-peeling tray to table and set down gently.
- 4) Tap the egg on the tray to crack the shell.
- 5) With one hand, hold the egg, using the other to peel.
- 6) When finished peeling, pick up the filled bowl with two hands and take to garbage/compost bin.
- 7) Place egg in slicer and carefully slice or cut with knife.
- 8) Eat the egg!

Photo Credit: howwemontessori.com



GETTING OUTSIDE!

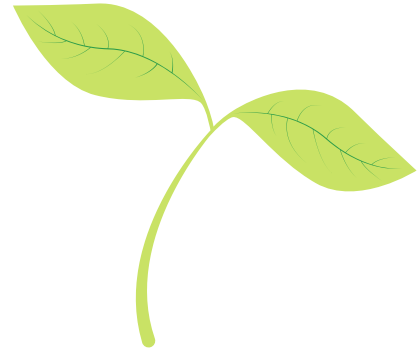
This past week, Kristen and her family enjoyed a beautiful 7 mile Hike!
Have you been on any hikes lately??





GETTING OUTSIDE!

Rachel and her family have been busy planting and taking care of their garden! You can see beets, pak choy, snow peas, carrots, onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, peas, and peppers growing in their garden. Lots of fun!



Leslie and her husband Patrick planted lettuce, broccoli, zucchini, and sunflowers in these beautiful pots on their back porch. We can't wait to see them grow!

