

---

Practical Life Sensorial Geography Music

Language Math Art Science

## Mom Bloggers Talk Montessori: Favorite Ideas and Activities

Independence Freedom of Choice Work Love

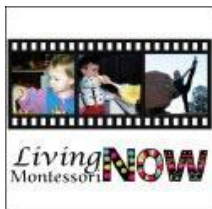
Repetition Respect Pink Tower

Communication Fabric Match Sandpaper Letters

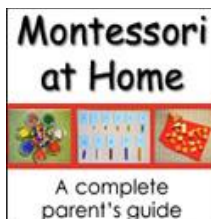
Geometric Solids Blog Constructive Triangles

---

An eBook from Deb Chitwood & John Bowman



*Deb Chitwood offers inspiration and information for parents and teachers on her blog: [Living Montessori Now](http://LivingMontessoriNow.com)*



*John Bowman's Ebook, **Montessori At Home!** Is a complete guide to doing Montessori early learning activities at home. Available at: [montessoriathomebook.com](http://montessoriathomebook.com)*

---

# *Mom Bloggers Talk Montessori: Favorite Activities & Ideas*

**An eBook from Deb Chitwood & John Bowman**

**© 2011 Deb Chitwood & John Bowman**

**All rights reserved. Please contact either:**

**Deb Chitwood at:** [debchitwood@livingmontessorinow.com](mailto:debchitwood@livingmontessorinow.com) , **or**

**John Bowman at:** [jbowmanbooks@gmail.com](mailto:jbowmanbooks@gmail.com)

## Table of Contents

Blogger & Activities	Page	Practical Life	Sensorial	Cultural & Science	Language	Math
<b>Martianne</b>	6					
Montessori Activity Bags	7	•	•	•	•	•
Car wash!	8	•	•			
<b>Jen</b>	9					
Dinosaur Egg Weighing	9	•	•	•	•	•
Liquids	10	•	•	•	•	•
State Study	10	•		•	•	
<b>Jessie</b>	11					
Blend Sorting	11				•	
Middle Vowels	12				•	
Practical Life for Fall	13	•	•			
Addition Strip Board	13					•
<b>Coedith</b>	14					
Christmas Tree Work	14	•	•	•		
Tea Time	15	•	•	•		
<b>Stephanie</b>	16					
Getting Outside	16	•	•	•	•	•
Stamp Game	18					•
Washing Clothes by Hand	19	•	•			
<b>Rachael</b>	19					
Button Chicken	20	•	•	•		
Colors	20		•			
Wooden Dowel Toy	21	•	•			
<b>Amanda</b>	22					
Rolling	22	•				
Sponging	23	•				
<b>Jen</b>	24					
DIY Math Project	24					•
Pattern Strips	26	•	•			•
Creating Shapes	27		•			•
<b>Ashley</b>	28					
Grinding, Baking, & more	28	•	•		•	

Blogger & Activities	Page	Practical Life	Sensorial	Cultural & Science	Language	Math
Domino Math	29					•
<b>Top 3 Montessori Principles You Can Use With Your Preschooler p. 30</b>						
<b>Nataša</b>	32					
Sink / Float	32	•		•	•	
Aggregate States of Water	33	•		•	•	
<b>Carolyn</b>	34					
Insects	34			•	•	
Skeleton	35			•	•	
Specimens from the Sea	36			•	•	
<b>Ms Shelley</b>	37					
Fabric Box	37		•			
100 Board	39					•
<b>Heidi</b>	42					
Writing Names	42				•	
Multiplication, Elementary Math	43					•
<b>Lisa</b>	44					
Elephant Math	44					•
Word Family Fun	45				•	
<b>Shelly</b>	46					
Open & Close	46	•				
Self-Serve Snacks	47	•				
Defining a Workspace	48	•				
<b>Share</b>	49					
Thankful Cards	49	•	•		•	
Thankful Leaves	50	•	•		•	
<b>Anupama</b>	51					
The Dwyer Approach	51				•	
<b>Allison</b>	53					
Please Touch Table	53		•	•		
Shoe Polishing	54	•				
<b>Jessica</b>	55					
Lacing Cards	55	•	•			
Matching Numbers	56					•
Pouring for Toddlers	58	•	•			
<b>Family &amp; co</b>	59					
Pink Series	59				•	

**Conclusion & Resource Links p. 61-62**

## Welcome!



Counting Coconuts

*Mom Bloggers not only do early learning at home; they blog about it so everyone can benefit. That makes them special. We thought it would be nice to hear from Mom Bloggers who focus on Montessori activities and principles. We wanted to get their thoughts on Montessori and hear about activities they have enjoyed doing and blogging about. We thought you might, too. So, here is a compilation of contributions from Montessori Mom Bloggers around the globe. We hope you have as much fun reading it as we did putting it together!*

*P.S. You will see a few Montessori Teachers here also. We call them 'Moms to Many'. In this way we recognize their vital role as caregivers and include their contributions!*

---

## What Does Montessori Mean to You?



Photo: Julie Smithey

Since Maria Montessori developed her revolutionary approach to helping children develop more of their potential, the word Montessori has come to mean many things.

Teachers taking Montessori training learn to bring the brilliant work of a visionary woman to life in Prepared Environments that children love today as much as they did in the early 1900s.

Children who attend a Montessori school find a fun place where they can do all kinds of things of their own choosing and learn to make their way in this world while getting along with others.

To Mothers doing Montessori at home, it is activities they put together, fun times with their kids, learning and growing along with their children, and feeling pride and joy when their little ones make progress. Mom Bloggers bring these experiences to life and encourage more parents to have their own. To all of you we say, "Thank You"!

Deb

John Boman

---



## Martianne

*Martianne Stanger is a traditional educator turned Montessori-inspired homeschooler of three young children, one with special needs. She blogs about homeschooling, faith, parenting and similar topics at:*

[traininghappyhearts.blogspot.com](http://traininghappyhearts.blogspot.com)

“As a long-time educator both in the US and abroad, I have always been interested in Montessori. It was not until my eldest son was a toddler, however, that I began to really dive into learning more about the method than I had come across through teacher training and casual contact.

At a very young age, my son demonstrated behaviors that made my husband and I feel that he would not do well in traditional school. His personality seemed well-suited for a Montessori environment. Due to location and financial constraints, sending him to a Montessori school was not an option, so we decided we would do our best to provide a Montessori-inspired education at home. Since then, I have read numerous books and blogs and have also participated in Karen Tyler's wonderful online class.



If you're anything like me, when you first began thinking about making your home more Montessori, you began to collect books, ideas and Montessori albums which are filled with activities, materials and suggestions about the environment. While all these can be very helpful, they can also be overwhelming. If, like me, you are easily distracted, get hyper-focused, or seek perfection even in the often imperfect, sometimes chaotic world of home keeping, homeschooling and, perhaps, working part time, then **the vision of what your Montessori home *should* look like might waylay it ever becoming a reality.** Truly, when I was just starting out, I let myself get "stuck" for a while, wanting to read more, learn more, understand more, get more materials, make more materials, get my home more in order... Are you seeing a trend here? **I was seeking perfection and more, more, more** ("missing" making the most of some of my children's sensitive periods) **instead of distilling all the "stuff" down to the philosophy and just beginning with what we had.**

So, in a nutshell, my suggestion for parents just starting to do Montessori activities at home is to **be less concerned about introducing the most ideal materials in the most ideal way in the most ideal environment and instead, begin with what is real.** As Maria Montessori did,

**OBSERVE your children in their environment, note their needs and attend to them in ways that you can with what you have.** Concentrate on the philosophy over the materials. Follow your children and the real observations you make of them.”

## Montessori Inspired Activity Bags

From Martiane's post: [Montessori In a Bag](#)

*“Some time ago, I got excited by a post on one of the yahoo groups I belong to which proposed an Activity Bag exchange based on the ideas at ActivityBags.com. I quickly responded, knowing that the exchange would motivate me to get going on fall planning for more formal pre-homeschooling with the kids. Within days, I was paired up with an energetic homeschooling mom of toddler twins. Together, we decided to begin our trade by making 24 bags each – a dozen to keep and a dozen to share.”*

**Curriculum Area(s):** Practical Life, Sensorial, Language and Mathematics

**Materials:** plastic zipper bags, various inexpensive and recycled items

*“I opted to limit my materials for use in the bags to mostly things I already had around the house that could be repurposed. These parameters, along with a wish to pay attention to some descriptors the mom I was paired with used to introduce her children, set me on my way.”*



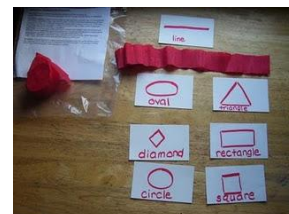
Tweezing Pom Poms



Sound Canisters



Yoga Cards



Walking The Line



Fabrics



Color Grading



Color Matching



Color Clips



Color Lacing



Sorting Buttons



Animal Numbers



Sorting Shapes

## Car Wash

From Martiane's post titled: [Practical Life: Car Wash!](#)

### Materials:

- a large cloth or blanket
- vinegar-solution spray bottles
- a roll of paper towels
- a vacuum and extension cord
- a dustbuster
- a hose
- a bucket
- dish detergent
- small cloths and towels

**and, of course, one very dirty car!**



**The car cleaning equivalent of creating a work space?**



**Wax on, wax off.....**



**Great Concentration!**



**Independence gets an assist!**

### Aims:

*eye-hand coordination, concentration, control, proprioceptive experience (lots of bending, stretching and crawling), tactile experience (rugs texture, wall texture, suds, eater, etc.), responsibility, family work time, care of environment, ability to clear a space, ability to spray clean, ability to vacuum, ability to wash the exterior of a vehicle.*

**Super, fun activities; and a great way to get this book started!  
Your comments on doing Montessori at home are fabulous, too.**

**Thanks, Martianne!**



## Jen

*Jen Altman is a Homeschooling Mom from Hawaii with a Master's in Early Childhood Education. She blogs about homeschooling (among other things) at:*

[chestnutgroveacademy.blogspot.com](http://chestnutgroveacademy.blogspot.com)

“The best way to implement Montessori principles into everyday life is to **give children a sense of independence**, let them help you in the kitchen, set the table, pour their own juice, get their own snacks, put things in their reach for easy access (like plates, cups, snacks, etc...), have them help you around the house, hanging laundry, putting clothes in to the wash or dryer, emptying the dishwasher, washing dishes, getting themselves dressed. **Encourage them in their everyday activities.** It's not always easy; it takes a lot of patience on the parent's part, and extra time. But it **builds their confidence** in the process!”

## Dinosaur Egg Weighing



### Comparing weight with Dinosaur Eggs (or any type of egg you want)

#### Items needed:

- Balance scale
- Several eggs filled with items of varying weights



“First, we talked about a balance scale, what it is and what it is used for. Then I chose two eggs that were distinctly different in weight, handed them to C, and had him tell me which one was heavier. Then we placed them on the balance scale to check his guess. We continued doing this until he was done with it.”

**Author's Note:** A perfect example of how great activities are usually a combination of experiences – Practical Life, Sensorial, Math. The more elements included while a child's attention is focused, the more effective the activity! Each of Jen's activities here takes this approach, a great way to make the best use of precious homeschooling time. *John*

## Liquids

See Jen's post on this super cool activity at: [Math Monday – Liquids](#).



*“Our math activity was measuring! We had a recipe that was 2 cups yellow water and 2 cups blue water. We had a 1 cup measuring cup, so we discussed how many times we had to fill it up with each color to get 2 cups. Then we mixed the recipe to get GREEN water. Then I brought out the pint container, and we counted to see how many cups made a pint, and how many pints made a half gallon. We also talked about empty, full, and half-full.”*

## State Study

Jen's post on this Geography and Culture activity is at: [State Study - Hawaii](#)

*“We are studying the 50 States this year. I decided to tackle our state first, and since our state was #50 to gain statehood, we will be going in backwards order of statehood! As part of our state study we are participating in a postcard exchange!”*

**\*\* Check out the great links Jen included in this post!**



**Nomenclature Cards**



**Family Album review**



**On the map**



## Jessie

***Jessie Beerman** is the mother of three primary-aged daughters and a Montessori Teacher. She blogs about having a Montessori home, preparing a home classroom for her children, and educational activities at:*

### **The Education of Ours.**

“I found Montessori as an undergrad, while studying traditional education. The philosophy made so much sense to me; I had found my little niche in life. After college, I found a job teaching at a Montessori School while attending American Montessori Society training. Shortly after training, I went on to get my Master of Education for Early Childhood Education. My thesis was about keeping the home environment consistent with Montessori School. How's that for foreshadowing? As a Mother, Montessori Philosophy worked well with our values and wishes for our children. While I work part time at a lovely Montessori School; I home school/after school my own children with the Montessori Method.

I feel that the best way to begin incorporating Montessori in the home is through **observation**. Each child and each family is different, so **by following your own child your Montessori home will be unique**. If you see your baby trying to pull up, prepare the child's environment so that it is secure and interesting for pulling up. If your toddler is dumping out her cereal at breakfast, give her pouring work. If your preschooler loves animals, bring in some science work. Think about **independence and warmth**. Take it one day at a time, **parents are learning, too!**”

## Blend Sorting

Read about this activity in Jessie's post: [Blending It All Together](#)





## Practical Life for Fall

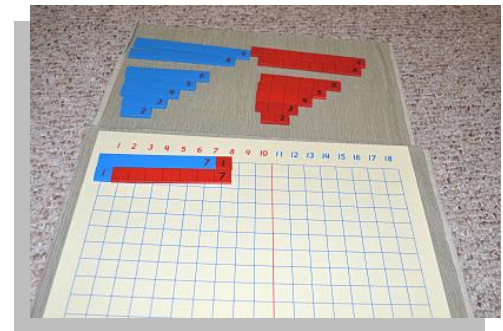
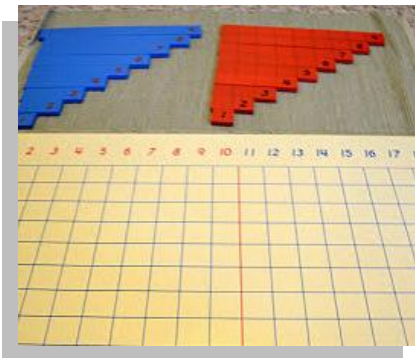
Jessie's post is at: [Fall Themed Practical Life](#)

*"It's nearly October in New England, and we are just now seeing a few signs of Autumn. My girls are very excited about the changing seasons, so we just updated our Practical Life-Physical Skills work with some objects from a craft store. These items were 75% off the day after Thanksgiving last year, total cost for the update was \$2.05. Today they were busy and independent for the entire work period. Every year, everything old is new again! I also used these items to create our Fall Sets Basket for counting, sorting, and numeration."*



## Addition Strip Board

See this post at: [Cumulative Property with the Addition Strip Board](#)



*"Left: The Addition Strip Board Set Up. This time, she let her little sisters set it up for her. "Once you know all your numerals, you can do this work! Okay?" They were happy to be involved. I showed her an example of Commutative Property,  $1+3=4$  AND  $3+1=4$  **Look at that! What a discovery** ;) She tries another..... $4+2$  AND  $2+4=6$  "Wait until my teacher finds out this secret, she's going to be surprised." She's so entertaining! Now she explores the idea. She made all of the Commutative Property equations. When I presented it, I showed it to her as a 'trick'....now she has this knowledge for future math work."*



## Coedith

**Coedith Mess** is a home schooling Mama. She blogs about living with children at:

[School In A Pink House](#)

“I worked as an assistant in an AMI Montessori school before having children. My children later attended this school and again I found myself in the classroom. I have experience in both primary and toddler classrooms.

My suggestion to any one just starting to incorporate Montessori into their home is to **spend time observing your child and their environment. Look at everything from their point of view** (I have been known to crawl to do this). Now ask yourself how you can guide them to as much independence as possible in your home. **Helping them "do it myself" is more important than any materials you may want to rush out and buy.**”

## Christmas Tree Work



Coedith's post is titled: [Christmas Tree Work](#)

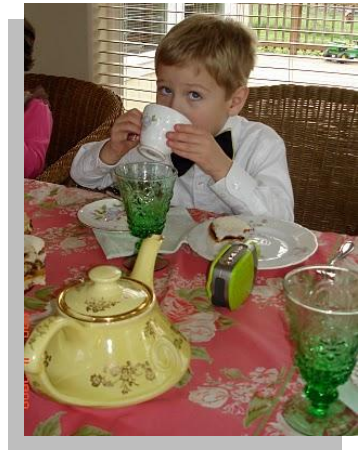
*“Remember Montessori encourages using the real thing (i.e., real tools not toys) Christmas trees are no exception. Playdough, felt, and foam trees can be a fun craft but it definitely isn't the real thing. We keep a small basket of sturdy ornaments near our tree. The way I look at it, it is 'work' to take the ornaments on and off the tree. This work needs no encouragement as it happens naturally*

*any time you have a toddler and a Christmas tree. Saying "no" gets old and putting everything out of reach seems cruel. Create a safe place and say "yes!"*”

## Tea Time

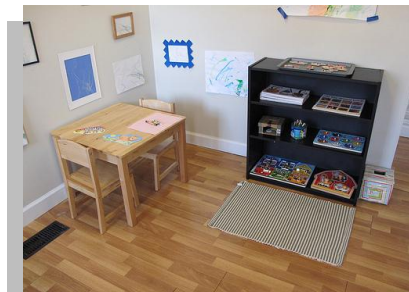


*"This is a shelf that rotates cooking activities for the girls. It is currently set up for preparing tea. Tea parties are multifaceted. It begins by choosing a menu, we may bake or simply put goldfish crackers in a pretty bowl. The table must be set, which might require ironing. It should be pretty, if flowers are in the yard they can be picked and arranged. The water is heated in an electric kettle that I chose because I can adjust the heat of the water. Once the water is hot a child can pour it into the pot. I also need to pick up sugar cubes and limit the amount used. Grace cannot help herself from eating all the sugar in the bowl!"*



See this post at: [Tea Time](#)

## How to Start Using Montessori at Home



**Deb Chitwood** writes:

*It seems overwhelming, I know. There are so many amazing Montessori activities and resources online, books to buy, and materials to make and buy. So, what should you do first?*

*I am sometimes amazed at how many resources are available on my site alone – and I link to TONS more. It becomes difficult to find them all among the many blog posts after awhile. So, here, I'll try to put an order to some of the posts I think are most helpful if you're trying to get started using Montessori at home for a child from birth-6.*

**Read & save this post at:** [Living Montessori Now](#)



## Stephanie

**Stephanie Stasa** is a Mom of two and a big Montessori enthusiast. She blogs about Montessori ideas and all the other little things at:

**Discovery Days and Montessori Moments**

“I was looking into schooling options for my kids and being homeschooled I knew that I wanted something different than the typical public school education. When someone mentioned Montessori to me I looked it up. It sounded good, so I called our local school and took the kids (and my hubbie) on a visit! It was amazing! I knew in that moment that we had found what I was looking for! My girls were so attracted to it and wanted to get to work in the room! One of the teachers in the room we visited even let them try a few things! I was all set to send them there, until I saw tuition. We just couldn't afford it. So I did the next best thing....**read like crazy and learned everything I could!** Shortly after that I found all the amazing Montessori bloggers out there who were able to help me find the answers I needed! The rest is history! We are loving our Montessori time and **I love being able to watch their faces light up with the joy of discoveries they have made!** It's the best part of Montessori!

## Getting Outside

Read about this at Stephanie's post: **Outside Prepared Environment!!!** Let's do a 'Pinterest' kind of thing and let Stephanie's photos speak for themselves.





**Name:** Outside Learning Environment

**Curriculum Areas:** Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, and Cultural! :)

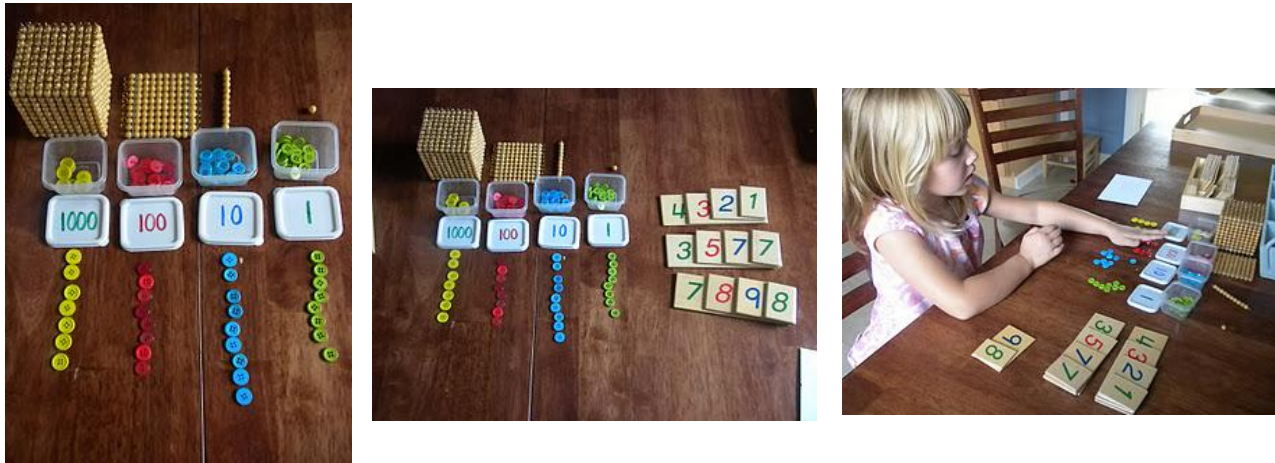
**Materials:**

- ~ Small Gardening station, table, picnic bench or shelf. (DIY Hint: cut the legs down on an outdoor table or garden shelf to make it the right height)
- ~ Plastic tote that is water resistant
- ~ Plastic school boxes
- ~ Montessori work (anything you want to do outside)
- ~ Pencils, paper, colored pencils, and sidewalk chalk
- ~ Natural elements (rocks, pinecones, acorns, etc)

*“This is an outdoor work environment that allows the child to **learn while outside!** In many Montessori books there are a great many pictures of Maria Montessori with kids learning outside. I wanted to make a space that would be just for that! All that you need to do is create the environment! At my house we had a garden station that was given to us and we cut down the legs so it was just the right height. Then I took some plastic school boxes and filled them with outside Montessori trays. One had story stones, parts of a leaf and plant, leaf rubbing, wire leaf (bending the leaf shape out of wire), clothes pins, long shoelaces, and material pieces to build tents, pencils and paper, and one with blank books! I then put these into larger water resistant plastic totes to keep out the rain. I also have scrub brushes and their watering cans out there for all manner of practical life work. I have natural objects for exploration and building, sidewalk chalk for scribbling out thoughts; and magnifying glasses for checking out all the stray insects that wander by! As I plan for more time out there, my boxes change with the season. I plan to do washing work in the warm summer, Bug nets and habitats in the spring, Leaf rubbing in the fall, and snowman building material there in the winter. Letter scavenger hunts, math with found objects, painting, and even exercise cards are all ideas that I want to add as I go! **This is our outside school room! The possibilities are endless!**”*

## Stamp Game

Stephanie's post on this activity is at: [Montessori Stamp Game – a DIY Version](#)



*“A Montessori Stamp Game costs about \$30 plus shipping. I was hoping to hold off on too much more school spending, and it just looked like it was too easy to make. To make it out of wooden tiles was going to cost me as much as buying, so I wanted another way. Then I saw the pile of buttons I had laying around from other Montessori works and I wondered if I could use them. I put each of the colored buttons in small containers with the number on the lid. Bunny really liked it! We built a number together and then she built one. Then we did an addition problem. The other good thing about the Stamp Game is that it takes less material, which means Bunny can move her work upstairs if she needs to. This means we can work even when Tadpole (who eats everything) is here.”*

“One thing that I think is essential to doing Montessori at home is to realize that we are with our kids all the time, which means **we don’t need to create every learning moment, sometimes they just happen**. My girls have had the best lessons while we were baking or playing with play dough. If you have materials on hand, then when the moment arrives you can create a project or tray that will allow them to learn what they are experiencing in life! In my basement, I have a shelf that is full of all sorts of odds and ends that one collects as they put together Montessori lessons. I know where most everything is, so I can grab it in a second when it’s needed. **Learning is best when it is spontaneous and comes from the child; not planned out by mom!** So read up and know how to teach, then when that unexpected moment happens, it can be amazingly memorable!”

**John:** “You are an awesome homeschooling Mom, Stephanie! I love the frugal Montessori approach. You can do a lot with a little and some imagination.”

## Washing Clothes By Hand

This fun post is at: [Handwashing Fun!!](#)



*"I got out some buckets, some soap, some vintage hankies, clothespins...I'm sure you know where I'm going with this. There was washing, wringing, clipping, and folding. Not to mention the grace and courtesy that needed to be practiced. Bunny loved it so much she wanted to wash some of her real clothes."*



## Rachael from Little Red Farm

*Rachael is a Mother of two. She blogs about applying Montessori principles in the home for under 3's at:*

[Little Red Farm](#)

**"My advice is to include your children in all the chores and tasks that you need to do around the house rather than worrying that you have to find something to distract them so that you can do it. If you have to hang the washing out let your child clip some pegs to a basket or if you have to peel potatoes let your child wash them for you. There are always ways to be inclusive if you are creative."**

## Button Chicken



See this oh so neat Practical Life and Arts & Crafts project at:

### The Button Chicken

“I stumbled across Montessori by chance 6 months ago when I read a book given to me by a friend (*Montessori from the Start*). I was immediately captivated and found that my personal philosophy on parenting and education seemed to

fit very well with the concepts of Maria Montessori and I had no idea that this type of approach existed (or that it was so popular).”

*“I absolutely adore the button chicken and Freddy really enjoys telling me which bit to remove and where to put it back (I'm hoping that soon he will have a go himself). The body has a piece of cardboard in it so it is easy to handle when you add or remove the feathers, foot or wing and the buttons are nice and big for toddler hands. It's a great way for children to practice their buttoning skills and so much cheaper than buying a Montessori dressing frame (and way more fun!).”*

## Colours



**Start with wooden egg cups and eggs**



**Paint everything**



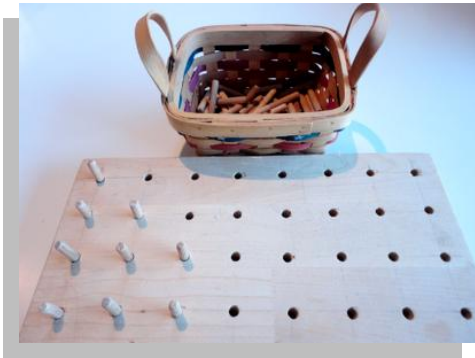
**Match them up!**

*“Here is a little game that I made for Freddy (20 months) who is really into colours at the moment. He is pretty good with the primary colours and a few others in both Swedish and English but if he sees more than a few different colours together at the same time he gets a bit confused. So I decided to make a little colour matching game for him.” I bought a bag of wooden egg cups and eggs from Buttinette in France.*

*I needed 6 eggs and 6 cups so the spares went into the treasure basket that I am putting together for the new baby. I chose to paint each egg and cup in either red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple using gloss finish acrylic paint. You can see from the photo that each egg had a small hole in the bottom which meant that I could use a wooden skewer to hold each egg as it was being painted. All of the eggs could then be stood up in a cup to dry. By the way you can see from the photos that I did all the painting in the middle of the night because I just couldn't sleep."*

See at: [Learning Colours](#)

## Wooden Dowel Toy



See at: [Handmade Wooden Dowel Toy](#)

*"Being married to a Swedish man means that we have our fair share of IKEA furniture around the house (it also means that they are assembled in minutes without instructions). It has been clear to us that Freddy (20 months) is currently in the inserting-dowels-into-holes sensitive period and we have several Billy bookcases without their full quota of dowels to testify to this fact.*

*What to do about this? How to harness it? Introducing the dowel inserting into hole activity! Farfar knocked this activity up in minutes from an off-cut of beech kitchen worktop and a drill just slightly larger than the dowels (which were purchased in a pack of 100). After a gentle sanding with coarse and then fine sandpaper the block was complete and ready to hold lots of the little 6mm wooden dowels.*

*The activity is completed by adding the lovely little American flag inspired basket from our recently received cultural exchange package from the USA to hold all of the dowels.*

*At the moment we are using the block in its current form but there are many additional things that could be done to add interest such as:*

- *Painting the block in rows or sections and colour coding the dowels to match*
- *Inserting pipe cleaners or thin sticks standing upright in the holes for a lacing or beading activity*
- *Using rubber bands or ribbons to trace out shapes with all of the dowels in place*
- *Using screws instead of dowels (Freddy will love inserting screws with a screwdriver). An excellent fine motor skills and concentration activity for a toddler!"*



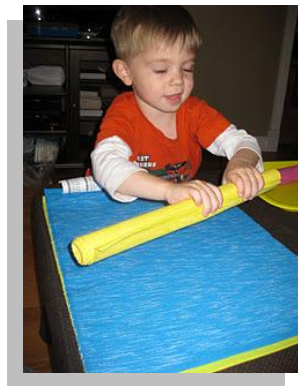
## Amanda

*Amanda is a stay-at-home mom to two little ones. She writes and shares their reading and learning adventures at:*

### Nursery Rhymes and Fun Times

"I'm fairly new to Montessori and have been inspired by a lot of the early childhood blogs I read. I've been trying to slowly incorporate Montessori activities into our tot school/preschool. My best advice is to **choose one activity a week and see what your child is interested in**. John's book has been very helpful for me in choosing activities-- the chart of a typical progression of activities has helped me choose activities from different "categories" and decide what activities my children may be ready for."

## Rolling



See this post at: [Rolling a Mat](#)

*"This past week we tried a new practical life activity: rolling place mats. I put four colored IKEA placemats on a tray and the goal of this exercise is that Jonathan would learn to gently unroll the placemats and then roll them back up. You can see detailed instructions about this exercise [here](#) at **Info Montessori**.*

*Unrolling the mat was fairly easy, but rolling the placemats took a bit more concentration. Jonathan would get overly excited and try to hurry through the exercise, just to find it didn't look correct. So not only did this help him develop fine motor control, but it also helped us learn a little bit more about being patient as well!*

*Jonathan really enjoyed this activity and **returned to it several times during the week**. His friend A. (3 years) also was really drawn to the activity. Both children found it **challenging, but not overly so**. I think this will be in our Tot School rotation frequently!"*

**Author's Note:** It is wonderful to see all the Mom Bloggers with infants and toddlers who are doing Montessori at home. The community keeps growing! *John*

Name of Activity: **Rolling a Mat**

Curriculum Area: **Practical Life**

Materials: **four placemats**

1. Put four rolled placemats onto a tray.
2. Show your child how to gently unroll the placemat and lay the placemat flat.
3. Show your child how to fold the end of the mat over and begin to roll the mat, turning the ends over gently.
4. Repeat motion until mat is fully rolled.
5. Place mat back on the tray.

Purpose: **Preparation for future exercises, Fine Motor Skills, Concentration, Patience**

## Sponging

Read about this wonderful activity at: [Montessori Monday: Wringing a Sponge](#)



*During one afternoon while I was attempting to get some cleaning done, I pulled out this activity. I got the idea from the book **Small Beginnings** by Barbara Curtis. I purchased a small two-compartment cat dish and put water in the left side of the dish. I gave Jonathan a sponge and showed him how to use the sponge to soak up the water. Then, we moved the sponge over to the right side of the dish and squeezed our hands to wring the sponge out. To extend the activity and give me some more cleaning time, I had him "wash" his fruits and vegetables."*





## Jen

*Jen is a Stay at Home Mother who worked professionally with young children for over ten years. She blogs about Montessori activities for toddlers and preschoolers, creating homemade Montessori works, and other fun ideas for young children and families at:*

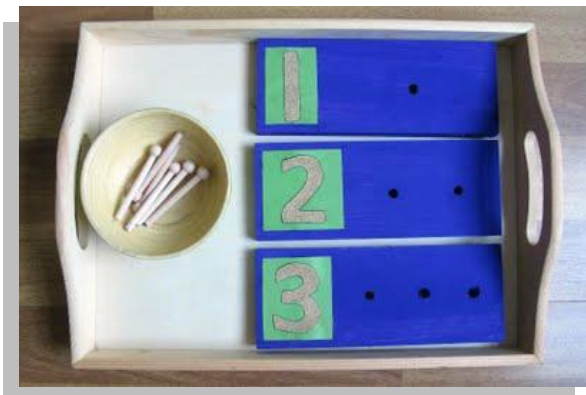
### Peaceful Parenting

“Up until a year and a half ago, the only thing I knew about Montessori was a description by a woman I used to nanny for. She told me that Montessori was, “*Where the kids sit on rugs and do work and no one can come into their space unless they're invited*”. I envisioned quiet, sterile, rather depressing rooms that didn't seem to be fun for young children at all and I didn't care to learn anything more about it. Like so many people, I held onto these myths and misconceptions about Montessori for years.

Soon after my son was born, I had a nagging feeling that I needed to investigate Montessori more closely. When he was nine months old I finally used Google to investigate and fell in love with what I was reading. I headed to my library and **started checking out every book they had on Montessori, eager to learn everything I could.** I also **discovered the blogs** of other parents doing Montessori in the home, which boosted my drive and inspiration to begin. I continue to learn from books (especially John Bowman's!), Montessori teachers and all of the wonderful blogging mothers out there! Montessori has been a perfect fit for my son and our family.”

## A DIY Math Project

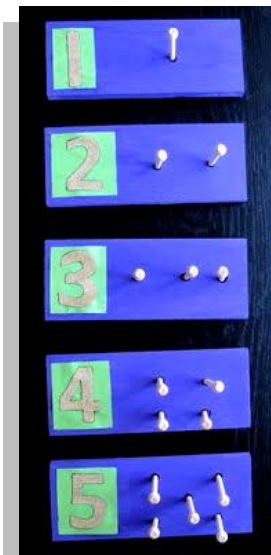
See Jen's post on this fun project at: [DIY Counting Boards with Sandpaper Numerals](#)



*“I've had this idea in my head, and most of the materials in-hand, for a couple months now. I'm not sure why I didn't start on it earlier, but I'm glad that I waited. **Ty is just coming to a really sensitive period with numbers** so this is just in time!*

*Several months ago, Ty wanted me to count everything for him, all the way up to the 60's and 70's. He then started touching each object*

to count to himself silently, as he didn't have many words and didn't even want to attempt a verbal try with numbers. In the last few weeks however, **Tyler has absolutely exploded with language.** The other day he took my hands and counted each of my fingers up to nine! I had never heard him utter a single number so this was a shock! Now he is counting objects and pictures in counting books up to ten and sometimes higher. He gets several numbers from 10-19 and understands if I say twenty one, twenty "two" and twenty "three" come next etc. and he will say them. He's really starting to show us what he knows with words, which is fun and rather amazing to us. Today he chose between two shirts and decided quickly upon a shirt with numbers on it, staring at the numbers for a long time, thinking. **"Here comes Mama to follow your lead, Ty!"** So, on to the project...



**Ta Da !**

See post for step-by-step instructions on how to create the boards:

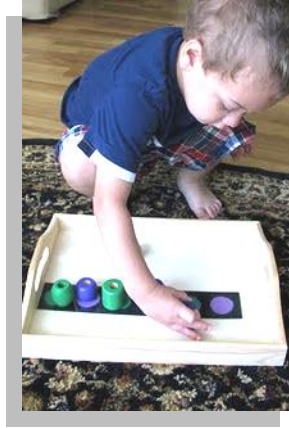
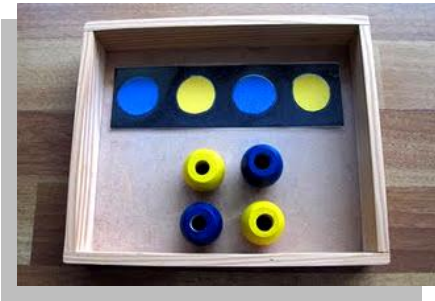
If your child doesn't yet recognize numbers 1-3, you may wish to do a three period lesson (explained in "Montessori at Home") with the numbers before working on quantity awareness with this activity. You can use the sandpaper numbers you made before or after you glue them to the boards.

To demonstrate use of the boards, have board "1" in front of you as well as one peg in a small bowl. Trace the number with your finger while saying "one". Slowly insert the peg into the hole while counting "one", then trace the number again saying "one". Let your child try. You can keep with one board for now or continue on to boards "2" and "3". If you plan to demonstrate all three boards at once, fill the bowl with the exact number of pegs needed (five) before you start. When you feel that your child knows the numbers and is understanding the idea of quantity, you can move on to number 4-6 etc.

“My advice to parents just starting to do Montessori at home would be to **really observe your child in their play and free time to see what sorts of things they like to do and are interested in, then develop many of your activities around that.** This will give you and your child more success with the work and your child will learn with joy! In addition, if a young child is only working on an activity for a couple minutes, try not to get too discouraged. Keep trying and remember that the attention span of young children can be quite short, so this is normal! However if a child is throwing materials, it's usually due to the work being too easy or too challenging. My advice would be to make the work more difficult in some way, try the next step up in that area, or simply put the work away for a few weeks and try again if the child doesn't seem ready.”

## Pattern Strips

Check this activity out at: [New on Our Montessori Shelves](#)



### Materials:

- At least 3 colors of card stock or construction paper, scissors, glue stick
- Melissa & Doug Jumbo Lacing beads, or other objects with solid colors
- Laminator (optional or use cold laminating pocket sheets)

*“To create the pattern strips, cut the amount of circles needed for your desired pattern from your colored paper. Next, glue the circles in your pattern onto black or white paper, leaving some space in-between the circles. Laminate if desired.*

*To demonstrate this work, have a strip and the exact number of beads (or whatever object you've chosen) needed in a small bowl in front of you. Going from left to right, point to the first color, and name it aloud. Then look at your beads and find the correct color to match, again naming the color as you pick it up and place it in the correct place on the strip. Continue this until the pattern is full. Intentionally making a mistake and correcting it can be a very helpful way to help the child learn as well. Next, let your child give it a try!”*

## Creating Shapes

Another crafty project from Jen at: [Creating Shapes](#)



*“I explain how to easily create these shape boards within my post (above). To demonstrate this activity, place one board and a bowl with the exact amount of beads in front of you. Take one bead from the bowl and slowly place it on one of the nails. I suggest starting at the tip with a triangle, the top-left with a square, and at the top middle nail with a circle. Continue placing beads in a clock-wise fashion until all of the nails are covered. Then, with your finger, trace around the shape and state the name of the shape you’ve created. Now it’s time for your child to try!”*

**Author’s Note:** Other options include wood screws left halfway out, gluing in wood doweling cut to size, or even those wood dowels shown in Jen’s first activity. A grid of attachment posts would create a Geo Board with enough space for the beads or big rubber bands, increasing the possibilities. The first activity could space the rods out to allow the beads to slip on, too.

### DIY Graduated Length Rods

Montessori Red Rods are cool. They are also expensive and use a lot of space. There are alternatives:

- Buy 2 yardsticks in a paint dept. (usually under \$1 each). Use the inch lines to make 10 rods in 1” increments, starting with 1” long, up to 10” long. Paint them or just leave them as is and turn them to the blank side for grading. Making them in 2” increments will require 3 yardsticks. *Sand the edges smooth before use.*
- Buy wooden crafts rods, 1/2” wooden doweling rods, or even straight tomato sticks and do as above using these, either painted or natural.
- Get 1” or so wide blue & red tape and wrap the yardstick rods in alternating colors to make **Montessori Number Rods**.

*John*



## Ashley

*Ashley is a mother of three energetic little men. She blogs about her family's crazy adventures in life and homeschooling at the wonderfully named:*

**Pirate Ships and Sealing Wax**

## Grinding, Baking, Language & More

Visit this great post at: [Who Will Help Me Grind the Wheat?](#)



A free online version of [The Little Red Hen](#) with vintage images from The Baldwin Project was the inspiration for this wonderful activity. After reading the book, the children decided to help the little red hen, and Ashley wisely arranged for that to happen! After grinding the wheat and baking bread, they extended the activity with a 'From Plant to Food' printable. Nice!

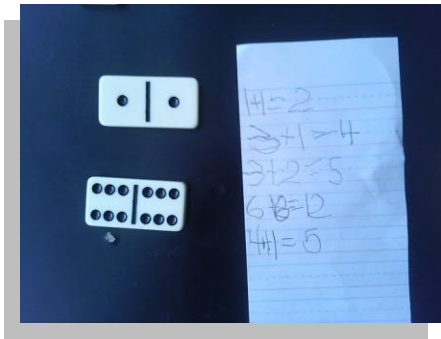
"I used to help my mother (who was trained in the Montessori method and ran her own small preschool for many years) prepare her materials when I was a little girl. I would sometimes go with her to the preschool where she was being trained. **I vividly remember clipping colorful clothespins to the rim of a bowl and transferring droppers full of blue water between glass bowls and the intense feeling of well being I felt, even as a grade-schooler.** After graduate school, my mother and I worked together to teach a small group of children in her home. When my mother moved on to bless other children at a private school, I inherited her preschool and taught on my own for a few years. I am now focusing on educating my own sweet boys at home and enjoy sharing my experiences, whatever they are worth, with other mothers."

## Domino Math

See this post at: [Dominoes: It All Adds Up to Fun!](#)



*"The other morning when my oldest woke up and found the dominoes he had left out after our game night he was reluctant to go up stairs to begin school work. So rather than fight him on it, I incorporated the game into our work. I went through and choose all the dominoes with up to 9 dots on each side. (For my younger little man I would only include dominoes with up to 3 or 4.) I placed the dominoes in a little wooden box and included several sheets of lined writing paper.*



*My son chose a domino and counted the dots on the left side and recorded the number on his paper. Then he counted up the right side and wrote out a simple addition problem. At this point he can add most numerals under 10 in his head but I had him count up the total number of dots on each domino to self-correct his work. (This would also be a very visual introduction to addition for younger children who would simply count the left side, right side,*

*and then the total number of dots on each domino. Children need not even record the problems until they are ready to do so.) By the time my son was done he had filled at least one sheet, front and back, no prompting from me. And he thought he was simply playing a game. Proof again that Montessori inspiration can come from anywhere. : )"*

"Recently I've been approached by several friends and acquaintances who tell me they would love to home school or practice Montessori in their homes but they just don't think they can do it. It really is a pity and I repeat myself over and over again; **"YES, you can!"** I've even found myself panicking at the beginning of a new school year because I haven't got a plan all laid out. With the wealth of information out there **it is easy to get overwhelmed** trying to understand the Montessori methodology and the "correct" way to present traditional Montessori materials. But if we **take a deep breath and take it one step at a time** our families will find great satisfaction as the "magic" of the method naturally unfolds. **I would advise families looking to incorporate a Montessori lifestyle in their homes to simply find one small space, be it a cupboard, closet, or bookshelf designated for the special use of your child. Fill it with child sized but functional cleaning supplies, dishes, cleaning supplies, etc. As your budget or space expands, add more shelves and add hands on educational materials that children can choose on their own.** Your first shelf may simply hold a jar of colored pencils or crayons, paper,

scissors, two bowls—one filled with beans—and a spoon to transfer from left to right. **Don't get hung up on whether the work is traditional "Montessori" or get bogged down reading all the books out there about the methodology.** There will be plenty of time to master this at your own pace and to expand as you go. All you really need to begin are the basics. Then **add a new activity every week or few days.** There are so many free ideas online and free video clips that demonstrate how to present more traditional Montessori work. Don't forget to follow your family's interests and make the activities your own. I find so many wonderful homeschooling materials that can easily be customized for a Montessori inspired education. I simply adjust the material to make it hands-on and as self-directed as possible and then place it on our shelves. **You can do this!"**

---

The following is from a guest post by Deb Chitwood at: [A Nation of Moms](#)

### Top 3 Montessori Principles You Can Use with Your Preschooler

Dr. Maria Montessori brought a new method of education to the world in the early 1900s. Children are still benefiting today. Whether or not your preschooler attends a Montessori school, you can help your child by following some basic [Montessori](#) principles at home.

Here are the top 3 Montessori principles you can use with your preschooler:

#### 1. Observe and follow your child.

Dr. Montessori based her system of education on observation of the child. The Montessori Method is about observing the child's needs and interests and following the child in response. If you follow your child's interests, you'll find your child loves learning ... and learns more easily than he or she would otherwise.

#### 2. Encourage your child's independence.

Montessori education is known for the saying "Teach me to do it myself." One of the best things you can do to foster your child's independence is to demonstrate new tasks, breaking the tasks down into clear steps. Here's an article I wrote about demonstrating tasks to encourage independence: [How to Help Your Preschooler Help Himself](#).

Anytime you can provide child-sized materials for your child will help your child's independence and enjoyment of a task as well. Not only are child-sized materials easier for a child to handle, but they also reflect an attitude of respect for the child.

### 3. Help your child develop a sense of order and self-discipline.



*Child sized materials made cleaning fun for my daughter, Christina, as a preschooler*

Colors, shapes, numeral and quantity identification, and a phonetic introduction to reading are just a few of the concepts preschoolers learn in Montessori schools. More important, though, are the sense of order and self-discipline children can develop.

You can help your child develop a sense of order and self-discipline by having a place for everything and encouraging your child to take care of his or her home environment. Low shelves with an orderly arrangement of toys on the shelves are very helpful for your child's independence and sense of order.

Practical life, or daily living, activities give your child the opportunity to develop order and self-discipline as he or she works through steps in a task and concentrates on that task. When your child is concentrating on a task, don't interrupt. It's that absorption in a task that will develop your child's self-discipline and ability to concentrate for progressively longer periods.

Online, you'll find a lot of help with practical life activities. There's a wealth of information and resources for [practical life activities](#) you could easily make available for your child at home. Also, every Monday, I have an [activity of the week](#) featuring activities I find online that are appropriate for use in the home.

**Note:** The activity of the week became part of [Montessori Monday](#), the weekly link-up of Montessori lessons/activities started by Nicole at [One Hook Wonder](#). Montessori Monday is now co-hosted by Nicole and me.

Each Monday, I focus on a particular activity or group of activities within a theme for my activity of the week. I typically link to many Montessori-inspired posts.

At the end of my Monday post (and Nicole's Monday post) is the Montessori Monday link-up. Please join us to link up your activity trays, Montessori lessons at home or school, and posts with Montessori ideas. The Montessori Monday post and linky is published each Monday morning at 6:00 a.m. EST, but you may link up any time throughout the week. *Deb*





## Nataša

*Nataša Tkalec is a primary Montessori head teacher who lives in Zagreb, Croatia. She teaches Montessori, ages 3-6. Nataša writes about activities that she does with children in the kindergarten. She has blogged in both Croatian and English for two years at:*

**Leptir - Montessori Blog**

**Author's Note:** *Nataša is a Montessori Teacher – one of our 'Moms to Many.' By including her in a Mom Blogger compilation we are recognizing the great contribution teachers make to raising children; and the pivotal role they play in their student's lives. Also, Leptir Montessori is a very well-known and loved blog in the Montessori Mom Blogging community!*

"I fell in love in Montessori pedagogy during my study at the Academy for teachers in Zagreb, in a Pre-school Pedagogy course when I read the book "Montessori or Waldorf?" by Marielle Seitz and Ursula Hallwachs. After graduating as a Preschool Teacher from the Academy for Teachers, I graduated from 2 training programs for Montessori primary teachers in Zagreb. I am currently attending the on-line course by Karen Tyler. I loved Montessori pedagogy from the first day when educators began to show exercises from the practical life area."

## Sink / Float



See this activity at: **Pluta-tone / Sink-Float**

*"The Sink-Float experiment is one of our favorites! In a dark blue pot are different items. The child puts them in a pot with water, and when she sees if they float or sink, puts them in the appropriate light blue pot. In front are the labels 'Float' & 'Sink'. Finally, all objects are classified, depending on if they float on the water or not."*



*"Instead of sorting items in to little pots, children can sort items in a table with columns marked SINK and FLOAT. I laminated the table for durability. I created tables in several languages: Croatian, English, Spanish, and French."*

**Author's Note:** Nataša's wonderful Sink /Float was featured in my [Activity of the Week – Sink and Float Plus Extensions](#). You'll find more ideas and extensions there as well. *Deb*

## Aggregate States of Water See at: [Aggregate States of Water](#)



*"Before breakfast we poured water into the ice mold and put it into the freezer. Before Circle Time, we retrieved our ice mold. We talked about what happened to the water, why it is no longer water, but ice. All the children felt the ice and some licked their fingers. We concluded after discussion that the water turned into ice; that water can be in solid form."*



*"I put the bowl with ice on a radiator. I told the children that after our circle time we will go for a walk, and when we return we will look at what happened to our ice. I showed the children the bowl with liquid water. They easily concluded that it was again liquid water."*



*"I asked the children their opinion about whether water can be converted into a gaseous state. They unanimously concluded that it cannot. I poured water into our electric kettle and told the children to wait and see themselves. When the water boiled steam rose from the kettle. We concluded that water when heated up can change from a liquid to a gaseous state."*



*"When I lifted the lid of the kettle, water droplets appeared on it. I explained to the children that this is due to the sudden temperature changes – the stove is boiling, and at room temperature is much cooler. I reminded the children to look at the same phenomenon at home in the kitchen. When lunch is cooking, the windows may also 'sweat'".*



## Carolyn

Carolyn Hadsell is a Montessori school owner and teacher for over 30 years. She blogs about creative curriculum at:

[Inspired Montessori and Arts.](#)

A Montessori ‘Mom to Many’ for over three decades, Carolyn is a graduate of MECA-Seton Montessori training in Chicago and has a BFA in Art Education, and certification in Early Childhood Education. Montessori has been the perfect vehicle for interests in art, music, science and curriculum planning. We are so pleased to include Carolyn in this ebook! You can visit her school at the [Montessori learning Center of Dundee](#).

*“I would love to share with teachers and homeschoolers how to start a biology unit using actual specimens. Nature specimens are all around us all the time. **One only has to observe, collect and expand on it.** I would like to direct you to three of my blog posts that display many ideas and versions how to teach biology using real creatures. The first is on Insects.”*

## Insects

See at: [Huge Unit on Insects](#)



*"Insects are everywhere and I suggest you begin with one bug in a box. Now, cut out pictures from magazines, get black line pictures of the creature by googling it in "images" and then make "Parts of" cards. Next, find a good art project that corresponds and a cooking project for fun."*

**Note:** Be sure to visit Carolyn's [Huge Unit on Insects](#), because, well, it's HUGE! Carolyn also very thoughtfully provided links to: [Photographs](#), line [Drawing for 'Parts Of' cards](#), a fun [Crafts Project](#), a [Great Recipe](#), and [Bugs in Resin](#). Thanks, Carolyn!

## Skeleton

See at: [Bone Unit](#)

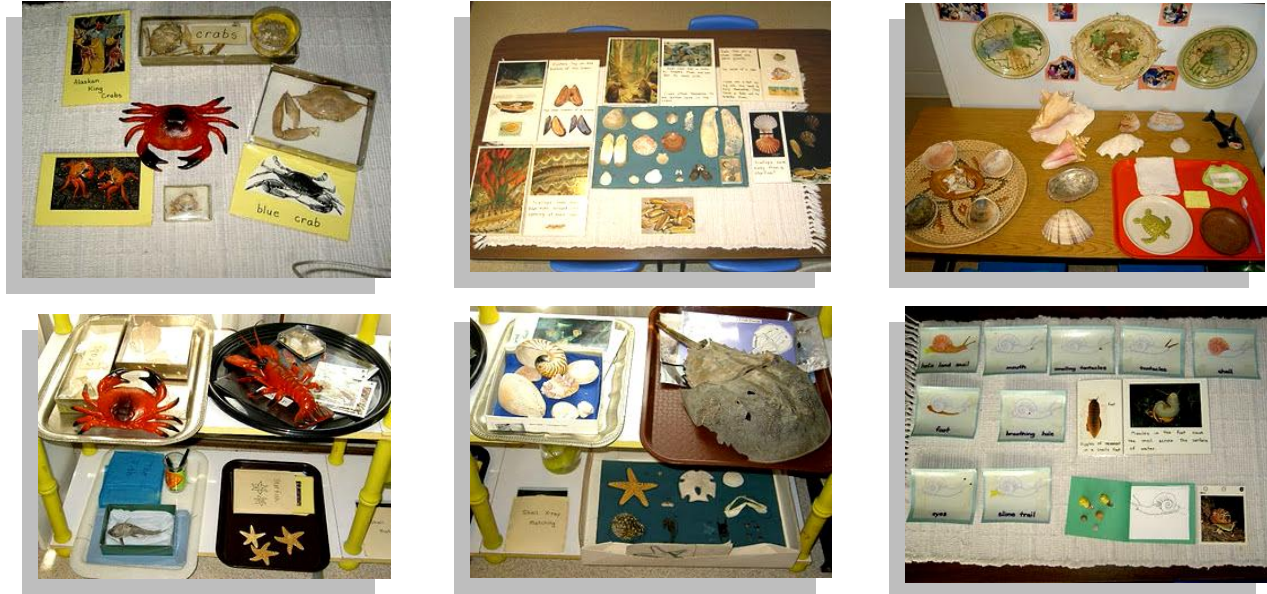


*"This bone unit can start with the wish bone from your baked chicken dinner and then the leg, breast, and wishbone from a turkey dinner. Lay the bones in the sun for many days in a place where the raccoons won't get them and then scrub with bleach water. My cow bones came from a farmer's field, the rabbit skeleton was in my yard under a bush, and antlers can be found at estate sales."*

## Specimens from the Sea

See at: [Ocean Life Unit](#)

“I envy you who are near an ocean. Take advantage of it to collect creatures and create matching cards, vocabulary cards, and hands on lessons. Most of us can find shells to match to cards, or at least a plastic crab from a party store.”



“My past students have told me that these science experiences are what they remember the most from my Montessori school. It leaves a lasting impression!”

We can see why, Carolyn!

**Author’s Note:** AMAZING units! Carolyn’s Huge Unit on Insects was featured in my [Montessori-Inspired Insect Unit for Summertime Learning and Fun](#). Her Ocean Life Unit was featured in my [Montessori-Inspired Ocean Unit for Summer Learning and Fun](#).

Another of Carolyn’s posts was featured in a Montessori Monday post: [Montessori Monday – Sensorial Size Extensions](#). Carolyn has many photos of extensions of pink tower, brown stair, and knobless cylinders from years of teaching in a Montessori school. It’s truly inspirational to see the awesome extensions that are possible using three sensorial materials!

In addition to being a Montessori teacher, Carolyn is a certified art teacher. She has many wonderful videos and [posts with clay projects](#). Inspired Montessori and Arts is definitely the first place to check when you’re looking for an idea using clay! *Deb*



## Ms. Shelley

*Shelley Bevilacqua is a Mom and Montessori Teacher. She blogs about bringing the Montessori method into your home at:*

[At Home Montessori News](#)

“In 2006 my husband and I were blessed with our son, Giuseppe. We were thrilled to be blessed (again) seventeen months later with our daughter, Giuliana. Giuseppe was enrolled in a Montessori school near our home the spring semester of 2008 (just two months shy of his second birthday). I did something a little different from the rest of the mommy group—after I saw how Giuseppe enjoyed his school, and the great joy his development under the Montessori Method brought me, I decided that I, too, wanted to be a part of a Montessori school. Three nights a week for two years, starting in August 2008, I attended PBCC to obtain my Montessori Teacher Training Certificate. I finished my internship in June 2010, and was immediately offered my own classroom by the owners of the Montessori school. The following August they offered to send me back to school, and in December I graduated and received my Director Credential!”

## Fabric Box



### FABRIC BOX

Age: 3 to 5 years old

Tactile Sense

Matching

Left to Right Progression

### Material

An open basket containing six squares of material of different makes. They include: denim, polyester, nylon, striped, flannel and cotton. A control set (placed in another open basket) is included in the form of a pocket. Both baskets are on a tray on the shelf in the sensorial area.

**Shelley’s Money-Saving Tip:** “You don’t have to buy fabric to make this lesson. When you’re cleaning out your child’s closet and discarding things that they’ve grown out of, don’t throw

them away! Instead, cut squares from them for your fabric box.”

### **Presentation 1**

1. Invite the child to work with the fabric baskets. “We will match fabrics of similar textures.”
2. Show the child where the fabric baskets are located on the shelf. After the child selects the fabric baskets say the name of the lesson.
3. Indicate the proper procedure for carrying the lesson (one hand on each side of the tray while holding close to the body).
4. Place the tray on the lower right hand corner of the rug.
5. Say, “I will match fabrics of similar textures.”
6. Begin with the “control basket” or the basket which is cut out in the form of pockets. Remove the top pocket shaped fabric, feel it, and place it in the upper left hand corner of the rug.
7. Continue with the remaining five pocket shaped fabrics by laying this control set from left to right at the top of the rug in a straight line.
8. Working with the second basket (rectangular shaped fabric), remove all the fabric and place them in mixed order in a straight line at the bottom of the rug.
9. Starting with the upper left hand corner of the rug., feel the first pocket and find its match at the bottom of the rug.
10. When the match is found, place the match below the pocket shaped fabric (control set).
11. Proceed with the remaining rectangular shaped fabric; matching similar textures from left to right. Always put the match below the pocket shaped fabric (control set).
12. Read work by saying, “I have matched fabrics of similar textures.”
13. When the material has been completed, return the rectangular shaped fabric one at a time to the basket, beginning at the left and continuing along the line.
14. Return the six pocket shaped fabrics to the second basket, one at a time, beginning at the left and continuing along the line.
15. Return the material to the shelf in the manner described in step #3.

### **Variation #1**

Blindfold: Proceed as in Presentation #1. Using a blindfold, assure the use of the tactile sense in matching the fabrics.

### **Variation #2**

Match to children’s clothes: As a group activity, have a child select fabric from the box and match the material to a child wearing the same fabric.

### **Purpose: Direct**

Discern similarities and differences in textured patterns.

Development of concentration, order, coordination, and independence.

Development of the tactile sense.

### Purpose: Indirect

Left to right progression for reading and writing.

Development of organization of work.

Development of problem solving techniques.

### Control of Error

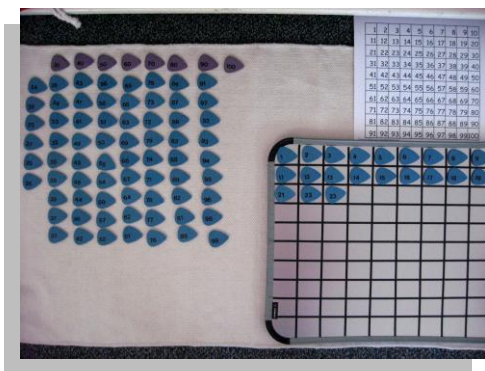
The second basket holding the pocket shaped fabrics.

### Point of Interest

The different textures and patterns of the fabric.

*“To teach Montessori at home, you’ll need to find **a place within the house** to have “school”—a place **where the child cannot become distracted** by television, pets, or non-Montessori playthings. This is where the child will do language, mathematics, and some sensorial activities, but the entire home will become a classroom for some exercises. If you’re going to teach Montessori at home, **be sure not to isolate the child—take him or her on outings and play dates so that he or she can develop the necessary social skills and niceties.** Also remember that **you are the observer in the Montessori Method**, not the teacher—**the child will guide you** in his or her learning by the activities he or she chooses to engage in. Make sure that everything in your prepared environment in the home is **low and easily reachable by the child.** This includes hooks, cupboards in the kitchen for practical life exercises, and all lessons. Your Montessori materials can be kept on a bookshelf, preferably a low three-shelf bookshelf.”*

## 100 Board



“Here is my version of the 100 Board. Since I have a background in music (I have been playing the alto saxophone for 22 years) I enjoy having my homemade lessons be on a musical theme. The actual board I used is a shiny metallic, magnetic, dry erase board from Office Depot. I then used dry erase board tape to create the lines on the board. I went on eBay and ordered 100 guitar picks. I also purchased small black numeral stickers from Office Depot to put on the guitar picks. Finally, I bought a roll of adhesive magnets and cut them small to fit the back of the guitar picks.”

**Note:** Preparation for this material includes the amount & numeral activities for 0-100.

**Material**

magnetic board & black board tape  
 100 guitar picks (blue and purple) basket  
 100 numeral chart

**Presentation**

1. Bring the silver, magnetic dry board, basket containing guitar picks (blue and purple), and 100 numeral chart to a large rug.
2. Place the silver, magnetic board on the lower middle of the rug.
3. Place the basket containing guitar picks in the lower right hand corner of the rug (to the right of the silver, magnetic board).
4. Place the 100 numeral chart in the upper right hand corner of the rug.
5. Say to student, "Remember when we did the ten boards and numerals to 99 with the beads and board? Now we are going to work with just the numerals to 100."
6. Look in the basket for the purple colored guitar picks. These are the numerals for the multiple of ten (10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, and 100).
7. Place these purple guitar picks in a row across the top of the rug.
8. Take one guitar pick (blue) from the basket and place it under the correct multiple of ten purple guitar pick. Here, the guitar pick with the same number of tens. The purple guitar pick for 100 goes to the right of the 90 guitar pick and the guitar pick for the numerals less than 10 go in a column to the left of
9. Continue with the blue guitar picks by taking them out one at a time and placing them in the correct column until all of the guitar picks have been placed.
10. Begin to place the guitar picks on the silver, magnetic board, beginning with numeral 1 (blue) in the upper left-hand corner. Say to the child, "What numeral comes next?" Then, ask the child to find that numeral and place it on the silver, magnetic board.
11. After all of the guitar picks (numerals) have been placed in rows (1-10), (11- 20), (21-30), (31-40), (41-50), (51-60), (61-70), (71-80), (81-90), and (91-100), say to the child, "Now we are going to read our work. Can you read the work to me?"
12. Beginning with the 1 (blue) and the multiples of ten (purple) return the guitar picks to the basket. The remaining guitar picks may be placed in random order into the basket.
13. Return the silver, magnetic board, basket, and 100 numeral chart back to the shelf.

**Points of Interest**

The silver, magnetic dry erase board  
 The colorful guitar picks  
 The sound of the magnet onto the silver, magnetic board

**Purpose: Direct**

Development of sequential order in thinking (logical thinking)

Vocabulary enrichment

To further develop the mathematical mind

To develop the concept of concrete and abstract

### **Purpose: Indirect**

Creative thinking

Oral expression

Recognize the order of the numerals

Multiplication preparation

Counting

### **Points of Emphasis**

Taking out of the basket multiples of ten

Placing the purple guitar picks (multiples of ten) at the end of each row on the magnetic dry erase board (as you get to each of them).

### **Variations**

**Skip Counting.** Have the child color the numeral chart to reinforce different lessons. For example, have them select a color and color all the squares that are multiples of two the same color. Repeat for number patterns for counting by fives and tens by selecting a different color. The chart becomes a great visual for skip counting by 2's, 5's, and 10's. NOTE: Have several copies of the numeral chart available with colored pencils.

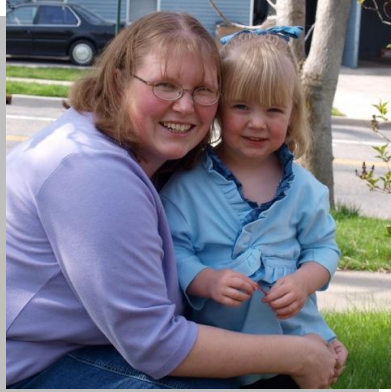
**Multiplication Tables.** Have the child color code the numeral chart for math factors and multiplication tables. The directress may print a different chart out for each number set, or work off of one chart. For example, color all multiples of three the same color. Ask the child if they see a pattern. Then, color all multiples of four a different color from multiples of three. NOTE: Have several copies of the numeral chart available with colored pencils.

**Author's Note:** I love that Ms. Shelley used her interest in music to prepare a creative version of the 100 Board. I think it's too easy to forget that we can be a positive influence on our children by following our own interests as well as theirs. It's similar to the concept of helping our children become readers by modeling reading ourselves.

Maria Montessori stressed the importance of the teacher's inner preparation:

*"The training of the teacher who is to help life is something far more than the learning of ideas. It includes the training of character; it is a preparation of the spirit."*

As moms and teachers, I think we'll be most effective if we follow our own interests and also find a balance, difficult as that may be. I wrote [Take a 30-Minute or a 5-Minute Me-Break](#) about techniques that always helped me. *Deb*



## Heidi

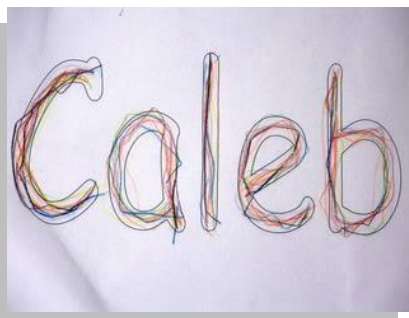
*Heidi Indahl is an experienced teacher who blogs about homeschooling her four children using primarily the Montessori method at:*

### Work and Play, Day by Day

Heidi has been blogging at Work and Play Day by Day for just over three years, sharing Montessori-inspired home school activities for infants and toddlers, children's house, and elementary age students. She and her husband (AMS 6-12 trained), have over 20 years combined experience in general education and Montessori. They have chosen home as the preferred place to teach their four children and integrate Montessori philosophy into many aspects of their daily life.

*"Applying the Montessori method at home is a challenge that offers rewards for both parents and children alike. **Montessori is not a one-size fits all approach.** There will be things that are popular with other Mom Bloggers that don't work for your family; and there will be aspects in which an alternative approach is more appropriate for your children. I encourage you to take what works for you and leave the rest. **Through the learning and growing process your relationship with your child will be strengthened and they will grow in ways you could not have imagined. Empowering a child is an indescribable wonder to be a part of!**"*

## Writing Names



See this great activity at Heidi's two posts:

### Writing Names

### Learning to Write Names

"The top post has instructions to make a re-useable name for practice writing. The bottom post has instructions for making a rainbow name for tracing. Both use the same template (instructions in the second post), representing

different ways to use the same information. In the top post I also refer to a third tool for learning to recognize and write names, a sandpaper name."



*"I think it is good to learn how to spell names correctly BEFORE getting too far into phonics and wanting to spell it the wrong way because it doesn't "sound like those letters"... I think learning it correctly early helps set the stage for sight words and rule-breakers (words that don't follow a phonetic pattern) later."*

*"In addition to teaching Kylee how to make a rainbow name as I did with Caleb, I also made her a **name writing practice folder**. I printed a blank rainbow*

*name and laminated it inside of a file folder (previous photo). She can write her name again and again with a dry erase marker and just wipe it away when she is done. You could do the same thing with a dotted name. She is young for this and I had fairly low expectations to be honest; but I am of the opinion that names make the best first writing experience. Clearly she was ready."*

## Multiplication & Elementary Math



Check out these posts from Heidi:

[Teaching Elementary Math](#)

[Multiplication Mastery](#)

These two posts are a collection of activities and description of materials designed to apply the Montessori method to the mastery of basic math facts. I discuss types of materials that we use from beginner activities through more advanced. My focus is on keeping the number of materials down; and I share tips for using materials in more than one way with alternatives where appropriate. We don't need to resort to traditional drill and practice approaches in order to reach mastery. I am submitting this set of posts because I believe they can help parents feel more confident to do just that! Remember that all of the manipulatives (Golden Beads, Stamp Game, and Bead Frame) allow for use and understanding without knowing the basic facts. The use of these materials, in fact, reinforces basic facts through repetition.

**Note:** [Living Montessori Now](#) has a wonderful post on the [Montessori Bead Materials](#).



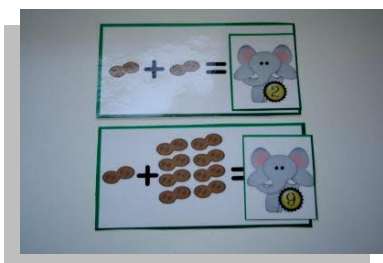
## Lisa

*Lisa is a stay at home mom of 4. She blogs about their learning adventures at:*

**[Our Country Road](#)**

“I do not have a background in the Montessori Method. I learned about it before my children were born and looked into training, but it was not a feasible option for us at the time. I have learned what I know from reading online and asking questions of others. I have a lot more to learn; and look forward to introducing more of the Montessori Method of learning into our home and school as I do.”

## Elephant Math



See these activities and more at:

**[Letter E Preschool & Kindergarten Free Printable Pack!](#)**

“This week we learned about the letter E – short e. I made a new printable pack to help with the concepts I wanted to teach. The pack can be downloaded here: **[Letter E Printable Pack](#)**.”

The pack includes Three Part beginning letter E sounds, Elephant and peanut cards & counters, Letter E sorting mats, Peanut addition strips, sight word cards, number match mat, elephant cutting strips, Word family car match game, Fable and elephant cards and a color match go fish game.

When I make my packs I am trying to make something for each of my children, as there are many levels in each pack. In case you do not have or want to get – or your child is allergic – I have included printable peanuts in my set.”

***“My advice to a mom wanting to start using Montessori at home is to just give it a try.***

***No, you are not going to get 'everything perfect' from the start, or ever for that matter. But, if you don't try you will never get there. There are so many great blogs and web-sites that will teach you everything you want to know about the Montessori Method; and great books you can read as well. My kids love the activities and have no idea if I 'did it right'.”***

## Word Family Fun



See this activity and many more at another of Lisa's fun-filled posts at:

### **B is for Bear Preschool and Kindergarten Free Printable Pack**

I made up another pack of printables to use with my kids

and to share with you. I hope you like them! The package can be downloaded here: **B is for Bear Pack**.

In this set there are four tents: it, in, et, & en. The bears have words on them: sit, hit, bit, tin, sin, win, set, net, wet, ten, hen, and Ben.

The idea is to put the bears in their word family tent!



**Author's Note:** Lisa is one of the mom bloggers who generously shares beautiful free printables. I wish these sorts of resources would have been available when I was a Montessori teacher and homeschooler. They make it so easy to create attractive activity trays!

I have two posts with LOTS of links to free printables: **Free Montessori Materials Online** and **Free Preschool Printables for Activity Trays**. The first post is generally of more traditional Montessori printables, although there often aren't clear dividing lines. Montessori-inspired activities can be created from many different types of printables. And don't miss **Instructions for Montessori Materials** from Montessori Print Shop! You'll find great tutorials and tips there for preparing activities from printables. *Deb*



## Shelly

*Shelly Phillips is a Mom and Life / Parenting Coach. She blogs about Conscious Parenting at:*

<http://www.awakeparent.com/>

*“I was an Assistant Teacher in Montessori classrooms for five years. I have several blogs about things like getting kids to help with clean-up, and setting them up with independent activities and having them help with cooking.....”*

## Open & Close

See this blog post at: [Open and Close Activities are a Big Hit!](#)

PS: This post also has a [great video](#) in it.



*“Have you ever noticed how much young children love to open and close things? And how they’ll repeat the opening and closing action again and again? If you think about it, we open and close things all the time in our daily lives, so why wouldn’t children want to learn this important skill? One of the things that continues to surprise me about open/close activities for children is how many times they’ll repeat the action. I’ve seen kids*

*absorbed in this work for well over thirty minutes at a time.*

*One of the great things about this activity is that it can grow with your child. Right now I have a couple of small metal tins, a small jar with a lid, and a plastic container with an attached lid in the activity for my 13 month old. But when she’s 3 years old, we’ll have a coin purse with a zipper, a box with a latch, and some other more challenging items.*

*Even if your child is 7 or 8 years old, you can find fun things to put in an open/close activity. Most 8 year olds I know LOVE figuring out how to lock and unlock padlocks or even the front door of their house. Of course you’ll have to decide what you’re comfortable with. Learning to open and close plastic baggies and food containers can be a fun challenge too. Remember diaries with locks?”*

**Note:** This is a wonderful description of making activities more challenging as children grow.

## Self-Serve Snacks



See this post at:

### Serve-yourself Snack Gives You More Freedom

*“When it comes to serving snack, the more the kids can help themselves, the better. This is true at home too. I mean, how many times have you been happily folding a load of laundry when your three year old whines,*

*“Mommy, I’m huuuunnnggrryyy.” Here’s the solution! If*

*you put out the necessary ingredients for a healthy snack on a child-sized table at say 9am every morning (or at 3pm if your kids are more hungry in the afternoon) your children can serve themselves whenever they’re hungry. This promotes independence while ensuring that your kids are eating a nutritious snack AND you don’t have to get up from your own work to serve them. Here are some snacks that I’ve seen work well for 3, 4, and 5 year olds”:*

Cheese and crackers

Peanut or other nut butters with crackers

“Ants on a log” Celery with peanut butter and raisins

Carrot sticks with dip

Apples- you can provide a whole apple with an apple slicer or slice the apple for your child.

Granola

Rice and beans w/ salsa

Rice with soy sauce

Cucumber slices

Fruit salad

Strawberries and shortcake

*“The trick is to set up the snack in a pleasing way providing everything they’ll need to grab a plate and napkin, serve themselves, sit down and eat, and then clean up after themselves. You may also want to include cups and a small pitcher of water, milk, or juice.”*



**Counting Coconuts** has a post that includes these ideas for easy-to-access snacks. At left are refrigerator shelves, and at right a snacks drawer, both filled with quick snacks a child can get independently. Also see Deb’s post: **Montessori-Inspired Food Preparation for Preschoolers.**



## Defining a Workspace



See this post at:

### A cure for clutter: using a rug to define a workspace

*“Are you tired of tripping over your child’s toys or bugging the kids to pick them up off the living room floor? Using a rug to define your child’s workspace is a great solution that works well for everyone!”*

*You might even already have a rug that will work well. You want a rag rug, bathmat, or other rug that is about three feet by four feet in size and is easy to roll up. To keep it out of the way when it’s not being used, you can store your rug in a clean trash can, large vase, or other container when it’s rolled up. And when your child is ready to get out her dinosaurs, remind her to get her rug first.”*

## The Activity Cycle

Maria Montessori believed that an orderly, aesthetically pleasing environment helps a child internalize a sense of beauty and order in their mind. She also intended for children to learn from each other as much as from the materials she created. But how to maintain order when many young children are busy sharing materials in the same space?

The **Activity Cycle** was an elegant solution. Montessori taught the children to follow these steps with every activity they chose to do:

1. **Create a work space by setting out a rug or table mat.**
2. **Bring the activity to the work space and use it.**
3. **Prepare the activity for use by the next child; and return it to its place on the shelf.**
4. **Put the rug or mat away.**

The children were never to disturb or touch another child’s work without permission or an invitation from the child using the work. When they used a material in their work space, it was their little domain that others had to respect. When finished, the children were required to put the material back clean and in an orderly condition, ready for the next child to use. Freedom and respect with responsibility – just like real life is supposed to work.

In one simple set of steps, Maria Montessori showed children using the Prepared Environment how to **live together respectfully and share resources responsibly**. She also taught them an **orderly approach to tasks**; and instilled a habit of **finishing what you start**. Wonderful lessons to learn during a person’s formative years! *John*



## Share

*Share Kelly is a Mom and philanthropist. She blogs about community and family health & wellness at:*

**[PLAYFULPOST.COM](http://PLAYFULPOST.COM)**

Share's graduate programs include Marriage and Family Therapy, with coursework in Play Therapy, as well as a separate degree program in Drama Therapy; a creative arts therapy program that emphasized the power of verbal and nonverbal communication via play, dramatic games, movement, dance, poetry, music, art, puppetry, dramatic interpretation, and an animal assisted therapy. To learn more, visit [NADT.org](http://NADT.org), and [The Delta Society](http://TheDeltaSociety.com).

Share has a focus of assisting individuals of unique abilities / injuries, i.e., veterans, elders, children, individuals with special needs, TBI, MRDD, etc., of all ages. She works with organizations such as the Ronald McDonald House, hospitals, clinics, day services, residential services, homecare and hospice to allow these modalities to empower the individual and support system(s) to focus on abilities, strengths, and interests.

## Thankful Cards



For a complete description, visit: [Thankful Cards](#)

*"This activity is used each year to create personalized party invitations with matching thank you cards. For example for a Space Adventure, a stack of quartered fluorescent yellow card stock was included in the tray. Circles of varied size & color were available for children to glue on as planets. Star stickers were also provided. A photo of the Birthday child(ren) was glued in the center along with a printed label detailing the party time, date & rsvp information. For a Luau a stack of orange paper was included with multi-colored flowers and stickers printed from color printer depicting a favorite Hawaiian cast of characters. Again pre-printed labels from the*





home color printer provided details for the party. Often, children will gravitate toward this activity tray and create a half dozen cards. By changing the paper color, stickers and stamps, children might create a supply of Birthday Cards in January to be used during the year.”

## Thankful Leaves



See this fun activity at: [Thankful Leaves](#)

This fun activity involves creating a tree, cutting out leaves, and writing the names of children and others on them, including why they are helpful and deserving of thanks. It can apply to many areas of a child’s life and be used in many ways. Be sure to visit Share’s post above for complete directions.

*“Fill Your Days with 'Edu-Tainment'! Educational Entertainment & ReCreation that offers hands-on learning & creation. Make the conscious decision to play every day and enjoy laughing together. For Homeschoolers AND Traditional Public or Private Schooling... Spend time together with the resources that are exciting to you and the children!”*

*Bring all generations, friends, neighbors, family-members together for some fun indoors & out by allowing the children to guide by springboarding from their current interests. Be awed by just how much the children are able to accomplish when adults step back and allow them to grow and learn. Give the child a lesson and then allow him/her to show family and friends how to do the activity together... creating a group project that may then become a gift... or take a digital photo and put the image on any number of items from t-shirts for the family reunion to mouse pads and holiday ornaments or stationery!”*

**Author’s Note:** I LOVE gratitude activities! You’ll find wonderful resources online for developing traditions of gratitude within your family.

Last year, I published [Activity of the Week – Montessori Gratitude Jar for Year-Round Gratitude](#). This year, I published [Montessori-Inspired Gratitude Activities](#).

I also love Pinterest for organizing and bookmarking ideas in a way that’s especially helpful for visual learners. I’ve added many gratitude activities of all types to my [Kid’s Thanksgiving Activities Pinterest board](#). Deb



## Anupama

*The 'Mommy to the Princesses' is a mom of two daughters ages 4 and 1. She blogs about the education activities with her daughters at:*

### Kingdom of the Pink Princesses

"I came across Montessori education when I was searching for a school for my 3 year old daughter. She was enrolled in one for close to a year, but unfortunately it did not work out for us. We loved the approach so much that we pulled her out of school and started homeschooling her using the same method and for a fraction of what we were paying for the private school! Before I start on the steps to this approach some of the key points that all the resources that I have read so far stressed and one should remember are:

- *Kids are not empty vessels that we dump information into (basic Montessori principle). As far a language goes, the children start talking by themselves before school age. All we are doing by following a Montessori approach is to provide some organization, guidance and key symbols using which the child can freely immerse themselves into reading and writing.*
- *The basic idea that we let the child deal with one difficulty at a time. Small steps as preparation leading into a larger goal.*
- *Setting up the child for success at every stage and provide just enough challenge so that the child can discover the joys of reading and writing by their own exploration.*

For the complete steps in the reading sequence Anupama blogged about, see:

### The Dwyer Approach for English Language Exploration

The steps detailed in this post are:

#### Preliminary Preparation

*This includes all the activities and daily life experiences that make language an integral part of a child's life. This includes books, songs, games, picture activities, and encouraging exploration of the sounds of spoken language.*

#### Sandpaper Letters

*Now the child learns all the sounds of the Phonetic Alphabet.*

#### Moveable Alphabet & Writing Activities

*Now the child builds words and practices writing letters and then words.*

### Object Boxes and Activity Words



*Left: Milk, nest, crab, & can*

*Right: Boy, goat, jar, shell*



*In this step objects with simple names are matched with hand written labels.*

### Puzzle Words

*This step introduces non-phonetic words using Three period lessons.*

### Little Booklets

*Booklets using the sounds and words the child has now learned promote a gradual adjustment to reading actual books.*

### Introducing the Names of the Alphabets

### Reading Folders



*Reading folders introduce the variations in spelling for the different phonograms.*

### Puzzle Words, Set #2

*These include more non-phonetic words, such as those with silent letters.*

### Phonogram Dictionary

*This tool further helps the child recognize words.*

### Dictation and Further Language Exploration

*More games, free composition, reading analysis, words study, and definitions keep the child moving forward into reading.*



## Allison

*Allison S. is a Montessori-inspired homeschooler to 3 children, ages 2, 4, and 7 (2 of her children have Autism Spectrum Disorder). She blogs about homeschooling, Montessori, and special needs at:*

### Barefoot in Suburbia

“I am a homeschooling mom who is Montessori inspired. We have always practiced Montessori principles even before we knew there was a name for it. Our children have been with us 24 hours a day since they were born and were always allowed to help in the kitchen or with other tasks. Our son went to a Montessori school for preschool through 1st grade due to having autism. At the same time, we homeschooled our younger daughter due to her own special needs. When the Montessori school was no longer working for our son, we took him out as well and began using Montessori-inspired principles at home, which he has responded to very well.”

## Please Touch Table

See at: [Homeschooling The Montessori Way](#)



“Prepare the top of a small shelf or table by washing it and protecting the surface if necessary. Gather some seasonal objects from nature (or purchase some specimens from an education store). Better yet, go on a nature hike with your child in your own backyard or neighborhood and allow the \*child\* to gather interesting objects. Clean and disinfect any objects that may contain small insects or diseases (such as bird's nests or broken egg shells) Lay the objects on a table according to theme (examples of themes include "autumn", "butterflies", "birds", "trees", etc.). The table in the picture contains some abandoned bird's nests, a sanitized owl pellet, replicas of owl skulls, and various feathers. We have also done a butterfly theme with replicas of the butterfly life cycle and actual caterpillars in a butterfly pavilion. In a bowl or on a tray, arrange objects that the child can use to investigate the objects on the 'Please Touch' table, including

tweezers, tongs, magnifiers, and small jars. On the table, also include some paper and colored pencils in case the child would like to journal about his or her experiences with the table. Let

*the child know that everything on the table can be touched and explored in any way he or she would like (any live specimens must be treated with respect though)."*

**Author's Note:** I LOVE Allison's "Please Touch" table! A nature tray or table is a wonderful addition to any Montessori-inspired environment. I have a post discussing Montessori and Waldorf [nature trays and nature tables](#) along with some examples and helpful links. If you have a space set aside for a nature tray or table, you can easily change the items from season to season. *Deb*

**We always try to involve our children in everything we do.** One of the things we always allow the children to do is **help with preparing meals**. Almost daily, all three of our children, even the 2 year old, can be found in the kitchen scrubbing vegetables, cutting fruit, mixing batter, or setting the table. It definitely takes more time to do when you're giving jobs to 3 young children (and making those jobs age appropriate!), but it is so worth it to see the smile that comes across your 2 year olds face when she's sliced her own banana for snack, the 4 year olds face when she's scrubbed a pile of vegetables for soup, and the 7 year olds face when the cookies he helped made are finally ready for tasting! **Once a child is able to stand up reliably, he or she is old enough to do something in the kitchen...**scrubbing potatoes, slicing soft fruits with pate knives, or mixing batter are all things that toddlers love to help with!"

## Shoe Polishing



**Materials:** On a tray, place a toothbrush, a nail brush, and another moderately stiff bristle brush (like a foot brush). You will also need a washcloth, a hand towel, two sponges, a bar of soap, a small bowl of water, and a small bowl of shoe polish. Because regular shoe polish is highly toxic, I wanted an all natural solution that is safe for skin and in case a little one accidentally got some in her mouth. We used a natural polish I made of two parts lemon juice and one part olive oil. You also need to have the child pick out a pair of shoes to polish. See at: [Barefoot In Suburbia](#).

*"Prepare a tray by folding the washcloth and towel, lining up the brushes, adding polish to a small bowl, and adding water to another small bowl. Lay a sponge by the water and another sponge by the polish. Place a small bar of soap by the water. Have the child pick out a pair of shoes to polish. Use the various brushes to brush the loose dirt off of the shoe. Wet a sponge in the water and get the sponge soapy. Scrub the shoe with the sponge until the dirt is removed. If necessary, use the toothbrush to scrub in the crevices of the shoe. Wet the washcloth with the water and wipe off*

*the shoe to remove the soap. Use the towel to dry the shoe. Dip the other sponge into the dish of polish and then rub the sponge on the shoe using small circular motions to polish the shoe. Repeat the process with the other shoe.”*

---



## Jessica

*Jessica is a Montessori-trained teacher and mom of two boys. She blogs about learning at home the Montessori way, with an emphasis on activities for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, at:*

### Our Montessori Home

“I first heard of the Montessori philosophy while pursuing a degree in Secondary English Education. My professor did not give a favorable view of the Method. She introduced Montessori schools as a place where children ran free and there was little learning. Fast forward two years later and I find myself looking for a job. I ended up at a Montessori school impressed with what I saw and joined the staff as an assistant in a 3-6 classroom. After 3 years, I left the school to stay home with my new baby and pursue my Infant/Toddler training. It wasn't too long after I finished the course that I started Our Montessori Home as a way to chronicle our journey and share the Method with others.”

## Lacing Cards



See this activity at: [Fine Motor: Lacing \(Sewing\) Cards](#)

*“I made these lacing cards out of cardboard. I cut simple shapes, outlined in marker and colored in with crayons, and then used a hole punch to make the holes. For the string, I used what I had on hand (which is why they don't all match). At the end the child would be lacing, I wrapped it with packaging tape to reinforce and make it sturdier for the child to hold.”*

**Ages:** 24+ months

**Materials:** work mat, basket, lacing cards (with the string tied to the card)

**Presentation:**

- Prepare the work and get out the mat.
- Sit down with the work facing the child and the mat between you.
- Demonstrate the activity by taking a lacing card and showing the child how to “sew” by moving the string in and out through the holes.
- Invite the child to do the work himself. With this activity, the child will most likely need more instruction, especially understanding the in and out motion of sewing and remembering to pull the string tight.
- When he or she finishes, have the child return the work to the shelf.

“I wrote a guest post for a fellow Montessori blogger last month and shared a few ways to build a Montessori lifestyle. The main points were to **prepare the environment, give your children sensory experiences, slow down, involve the children in the everyday workings of the home, respect the child, and explore.** You can find the article here: [Building a Montessori Lifestyle.](#)”

## Matching Numbers



See this activity at: [Matching Numbers](#)

**Age:** 18 – 24 months

**Goal:** To practice counting and develop fine motor skills.

**Materials:** mat, tray, objects to count, cards with numbers 1 to 3, numbers

### Making the Materials

**Numbers** - To make the numbers I traced and cut out numbers 0-10 from black construction paper and had them laminated. *(For this activity, I started with 0-3 and will add numbers as his skill increases.)*



**Number cards** - I cut poster board into 5" x 12" sheets, traced the number at the top, and then traced the corresponding quantity of beads under the number. I prefer to have my numbers in 2 rows. This allows an even number to have two even rows and with an odd number the final counter goes in



the middle underneath the two rows. This provides the basis for introducing odd and even numbers.

**Counters** - I chose to use large, decorative beads I found in the floral section of a craft store. There should only be as many beads as needed. For example, in counting 0 to 3 there should only be 6 beads. This is the built-in control of error. If a child gets to 3 and doesn't have enough beads he or she knows (or can be directed) to check their work.

**Safety note:** *If your child is still in the stage where he or she puts things in their mouth, I would advise you to find a larger object to count with; only do this work with your child and then store it in a safe place out of little hands; or wait until they're past the everything-in-the-mouth stage.*

1. Prepare the work and get out the mat.
  2. With the work facing the child and the mat between you (or sit on the child's right-hand side), set the basket to the child's right.
  3. Lay the number cards on the mat starting with zero and continuing in sequential order.
  4. Take the numbers out of the basket (they don't have to be in order). Pick up the first number, name it, and place on its corresponding outline. Continue with the rest of the numbers.
  5. Starting with zero tell the child that zero means nothing and doesn't need any beads.
- \*\* In my experience, most children learn counting with 1, but when introduced to tens and hundreds they struggle because they don't know what zero is, but feel compelled to give it a quantity.**
6. Continue on with the next number. Count one. With two, count – one, two and so on. This is so that the child begins to understand that each number builds on the previous number and grows in quantity.
  7. Once you have completed one cycle of the work, return the numbers and counters to the tray and invite the child to complete the work on their own. If the child struggles then help, otherwise allow them to work quietly.
  8. Once the child has completed the work, have them return the materials to the tray and put the work back on the shelf.

Jessica's description contains a number of great tips. Quite often the little details - having just enough counting objects, tracing the beads on as a guide, including zero – make an activity a much more effective teaching tool. *John*

## Pouring for Toddlers



See this activity at: [Practical Life: Pouring \(for toddlers\)](#)

**Ages:** 18 to 24 months

**Materials:** work mat, tray, 2 identical containers, objects to pour

**Presentation:**

- Prepare the work and get out the mat.
- With the work facing the child and the mat between you, make sure the container with the objects is on the child's left-hand side.
- Demonstrate two-hand pouring with one hand on the top and the other on the bottom of the container. Emphasize that we pour with two hands.
- Pour the objects into the container on the right. After setting down the container, pour the objects back into the original container completing the cycle.
- Now, invite the child to pour the objects. Help only if the child doesn't seem to know what to do.
- When he or she finishes, have them return the work to the shelf.



**Extension(s):**

For a greater challenge vary the **size of the containers** (use some with handles and a spout) and the **materials being poured**.



The last two photos show three graduated size containers.

Great activities, Jessica! In the Practical Life section of [Montessori At Home!](#) there is a sequence of pouring activities that moves a child along gradually from the first whole hand grasp all the way to holding a small spoon with a writing grasp. These activities prepare a child for holding a writing instrument. *John*

## Family & co

*Family & co blogs about homeschooling at:*

**Family & co**

**\*\*Note:** Family& co's blog appears in French. Changes have been made to the activity description as needed with permission.

## Pink Series

Activity Link: [Pink Series](#)

*These are instructions on how to organize the boxes in the pink series and how to present them to the student. Here are the language shelves showing the order in the different stages of reading:*



- The game "I guess".
- Sandpaper letters.
- Match objects with sandpaper letters.
- Match pictures with sandpaper letters.
- Match moveable alphabet.
- Pink Series on the bottom shelf.

Here are some explanations on how to present this material:



This series consists of a series of boxes (steps)  
The words are to be written using the moveable alphabet.



The child opens the first box and places the objects on the table.



Make sure the child knows the names of the objects. If he does not know, use the 3-Period Lesson. The child then writes the words with the moveable alphabet.



He uses the pink cards to check and correct the words. We do not move to the second box if the child does not fully understand the first.



The second box is composed of images and words. The child places the images on the carpet.

**NOTE:** [Montessori Print Shop](#) has printable materials for the **Pink Series**, and much more, for instant downloading. *John*



Then he takes the word and places in front of the picture that matches.



The third box follows the same principle as the first. (Objects and moveable alphabet)

The fourth box is the mystery box. These are verbs to read, act out and to guess what the other children or teacher is acting out.

Boxes 5, 6 and 7 are reading.

The last is a board game.

“I have been trained in the UK by a friend who is a Montessori teacher.

The best is to ask all the children to sit in the middle of the classroom. We start to tell them that they are going to work with the Montessori method and for that we need to make some rules together: talking quietly, tidy after you take a material, call the teacher or your mum by touching her shoulder and go back to your place until she comes. Empty the trash can at the end of the class. The children are invited to make some rules. We write them on a paper that we will put in the classroom. So anytime a child does not respect a rule, we take him to read the rule or we read it for him nicely.”

---

## Conclusion & Resources

It has been a lot of fun bringing you glimpses into home learning activities created by these wonderful Moms. We hope you take away some meaningful insights for your own home early learning. We encourage you to find your favorite bloggers and visit them regularly. You can also set up an RSS feed, such as Google's Reader, to automatically collect blog posts for you to check out so you do not have to search the internet. We wish you all the best in your home early learning efforts!

**Montessori At home!** is a 296 page ebook containing a complete guide to doing Montessori Early Learning activities at home.

To give you more ideas, here are some great resources from Deb Chitwood from her blog post:

## **[How to Set Up a Montessori Homeschool Classroom](#)**

### **My Main Montessori Classroom Posts**

**[Become a More Successful Homeschooler by Using Montessori Principles](#)**

**[How to Set Up a Montessori Preschool Classroom at Home](#)**

**[Setting a Montessori Homeschool Classroom Schedule](#)**

**[How to Add Godly Play to Your Homeschool](#)** (if you want to add a Montessori-based religious education program)

### **Montessori Curriculum Areas**

**[Montessori Practical Life Activities](#)**

**[Montessori Sensorial Activities](#)**

**[Montessori Language Activities](#)**

**[Montessori Math Activities](#)**

**[Montessori Cultural Activities](#)**

### **Where to Get Montessori Materials for Your Homeschool**

**[Free Montessori Materials Online](#)**

**[Where to Buy Montessori Materials](#)**

**[How to Make Your Own Montessori Materials](#)**

### **Montessori Principles**

**[Top 10 Montessori Principles for Natural Learning](#)**

**[Your Young Child's Amazing, Absorbent Mind](#)**

**[Encourage Your Child's Sensitive Periods](#)**

### **Montessori Techniques**

**[How to Help Your Preschooler Help Himself](#)**

**[Why is Analysis of Movement Important in Montessori Education?](#)**

**[How to Teach Your Preschooler Manners Using Montessori Principles](#)**

**How to Teach Concepts and Vocabulary to Your Preschooler Using the Three-Period Lesson**

**In What Order Should You Introduce Letters to Your Preschooler?**

**How to Manage Interruptions in Your Montessori Classroom or Homeschool**

## **Ideas for Montessori Activities (Categories of Blog Posts)**

**Activities – Practical Life**

**Activities – Practical Life – Grace and Courtesy**

**Activities – Sensorial**

**Activities – Language**

**Activities – Math**

**Activities – Art**

**Activities – Cultural**



***“The most important period of life is not the age of university studies but the first one, from birth to the age of six. For that is the time when man’s intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed.”***

*Maria Montessori*