



## Preparing Your Toddler For Their First Montessori Experience

For most toddlers, coming to school is a completely new experience for them. Often, this is the first time a child has been away from their parents. Below are some ways that you can help your child (and you!) have a more successful transition:

\*Begin by implementing the Montessori philosophy at home by allowing your child to help with daily routines. This can include setting the table at mealtimes; stirring ingredients; washing fruits and vegetables; sorting silverware from the dishwasher (spoons with spoons, etc.); pouring small amounts of water into a cup; wiping up spills; sweeping with child-size broom and dust-pan; and "washing" dishes at the sink (using a step-stool, if necessary). Other ideas include matching socks in the laundry; taking their shoes on and off independently; putting on and taking off clothing independently; hanging up their jackets on a hook that they can reach; placing books and toys within reach so that your child can take them out and also put them away when finished; washing their hands independently; and watering plants with a small watering can. These are just a few of the many ideas that you can start doing right away so that your child is used to being independent both at home and school. There are many more ideas that can be found on-line by searching with key-words such as: Montessori toddler ideas for the home.

\*Provide social experiences away from home and away from you. It is important that every child learn to be away from their parents, and feel safe and comfortable with other trusted adults. Arrange for play-dates or short classes during the summer where you leave your child in the care of another adult for increasingly longer periods of time. Always explain to your child that you will be gone for a bit, and that you will return a little later. Be consistent in returning when promised at the end of the class or play-date so that your child feels confident that you will come back for them when expected.

\*Arrival and departure can be made much easier on both your child and you if you talk to your child about school and what to expect. Tell your child how fun it will

be, and how much you like his/her teachers. Your positive comments will help your child to want to come to school. Avoid bribery or apologizing to your child about sending them to school. Discuss what your child should expect (for instance, tell them that their teacher will walk them into the school after you give them a quick hug good-bye, and remind them when you will return). Try to refrain from an extra hug or following your child into the school if they seem upset. Your child needs to see that you trust his/her teachers to take care of them so that they, in turn, trust their teachers, also. Consistency is extremely important! We understand that it is hard to see your child upset, however, our years of experience has taught us that the longer it takes to say good-bye, the harder it is on your child.

\*Have your child wear clothing that they can dress and undress themselves in with no assistance. Examples include: elastic waist pants, pull-over shirts, and velcro or slip-on shoes. This will help to build their self-confidence and help them to be independent and capable at school. Being able to pull their pants and underpants off when needing to use the toilet will help to set your child up to succeed, and avoid "accidents" while waiting for a teacher to help.

\*Communication is extremely important between home and school. If your child is having a difficult morning prior to coming to school, or if there will be any change in routine, please let the teachers know. Toddlers are not always able to express themselves verbally, so it is important for your child's teachers to be aware of anything that might cause your child to be "off."

\*Finally, know that your child's teachers want what is best for you and your child at all times. Our job is to make your child feel safe, confident, and happy while in our care. If there is ever anything that we can do to help your child (and you!) successfully enter this next exciting phase of your child's life, please don't hesitate to let us know!!