

PARENT EDUCATION NIGHT

Tuesday, September 17th, 2013

Morning Routine for Toddler, Primary and Elementary Children

The following Montessori principals can be applied to children at home during the morning routine. We can find ways to encourage:

INDEPENDENCE - Toddlers are becoming more and more independent. Foster this independence by simplifying things so they can do it by themselves. "Help me to do it by myself". Autonomy develops confidence, perceptions of capability and strong life skills.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE – Give toddlers and pre-schoolers a choice between two things, be sure these are both acceptable choices to you.

ROUTINE – Very important for toddlers to have an established routine.

RESPECT – Be respectful of their needs and set an example. Children will copy behavior modeled by adults. Be gracious and courteous to your child.

ORDER – Have an orderly environment during the morning routine. The child needs external order to be able to develop own sense of internal order.

PRACTICE – any changes you decide to make in the morning routine, should be introduced when you have time to work on them, such as on the weekend. Set up a morning routine chart with your child, use photos, have them decorate it etc.

Then the chart dictates the order of events in the mornings, not you!

First, take care of your own needs!

As in the airplane safety demonstration, be sure to put on your own oxygen mask before helping others. Plan to rise 30 minutes before your child/children. You will have time to prepare yourself, take a shower, enjoy a quiet cup of coffee and be ready to assist your child, should they need it, when they wake up.

Waking-Up

Usually toddlers and pre-schoolers are early risers. If they are waking too late, consider an earlier bedtime. Occasionally there will be exceptions, unexpected late nights, but try to keep their routine consistent.

Breakfast

A toddler and pre-schooler can help themselves to their own cereal with a little prior preparation by the adult. Have their bowl, plate, cup, cutlery etc. in a low drawer or cupboard in the kitchen that is at their height so that they may get it themselves. Pre-measure the desired amount of cereal into a container. The child can then pour it into their bowl. Do the same with the milk. The milk jug can be stored in the refrigerator at their height, so they may help themselves. Show your child how to pour the milk from the jug into the bowl.

Consider a child size table and chair for them to eat breakfast at. Avoid strapping your toddler into a highchair or booster seat for an adult sized chair.

Once finished the child can clear the dishes from the table and wipe the table to clear up any spills. Have a tray with a spray bottle containing water, a sponge and a cloth to dry. Good to have child size broom, mop and dustpan and brush, for cleaning up. All are available inexpensively at Amazon.com or the dollar store etc.

Washing Face and Cleaning Teeth

Be sure to have your toddler's toiletries accessible in the bathroom. Have a step

stool so your toddler can reach the sink. Show your toddler how to wash and dry their face. Have a tray laid out with toothbrush, toothpaste, cup from left to right, and show how to brush their teeth. Sing songs and make it fun for them.

Getting Dressed

Give your toddler/pre-schooler a choice. They are more likely to be involved in an activity when they have made their own choices. Have a drawer with a limited choice of appropriate clothes and allow them to choose what they would like to wear. If they are not prepared to make a choice, then tell them you will make one for them. They can try again to make their own choice tomorrow.

Help your toddler to be more independent by providing clothes that are easy to put on, ie. elasticated waist bands. Clothes that are not too tight. The idea is to set them up for success, not failure.

5 Minute Call

Give your child a 5 minute warning before you need to leave. A kitchen timer may come in very useful. Don't forget to leave time for putting on shoes and socks. Take turns if child is reluctant to do this by themselves. Offer them help, but don't do it for them if you know it is something they are able to do by themselves.

Teaching your child skills

Children are not born with skills. They need to be taught and repeated many times.

When showing children how to sweep or wipe a table slow down movements so they can see each step and detail. Explain that you will take a turn and then they may have a turn. Use minimal language, naming objects etc. Separate language and movement for toddlers as they are in a sensitive period for both at this age.

Use a hula hoop to mark the boundary of a floor spill. This gives the child an area of focus for cleaning up. It also breaks down a big spill into smaller, manageable ones, making the cleanup situation less daunting.

Electronics in the morning

The TV and all manner of electronics can be a huge distraction to your child and interrupt your morning flow. If your child cannot do without a little screen time in the morning, then offer it after they are all ready.

Have an unplugged drive to school too. Listen to children's songs, a favorite album or an audio book. These allow opportunities for you to have discussions with your

child. Ask questions about the audio book you just listened to. Sometimes it is easier to talk about a common experience rather than try to get answers to your questions about their day in school! Model the art of conversation, being an active listener, taking turns to say what is on your mind, not interrupting etc. Being present with your child, even if it is for the 10 – 15 min drive to/from school each day will show them that you are genuinely interested in hearing what they have to say. Respect the fact that some days, they will just not feel like talking and that is fine too.

Encouraging Responsibility

At the elementary age children can take on more responsibility for themselves during the morning routine. Elementary age students may not wake up as early as younger children, so purchase an alarm clock for you child. Help them figure out what time they need to set the alarm in order to be on time for school.

They can also take responsibility for making their own lunches. You can plan a menu for the week with them and have them make a grocery list to be sure they have everything they need to make their lunches for the week. The routine chart still works well at this age as they love to check off what they have completed.

Some general points to remember . . .

- A toddler does everything to the best of their ability. To our adult mind it may be far from perfect, but helping your toddler develop confidence, perceptions of capability and strong life skills is more important than ease, speed and perfection.
- Be consistent! Do what you say you are going to do.
- If you have a good, well established routine then you are setting your child up to have a successful day in school. Their day flows from the home to the school environment effortlessly.

Thank you.

Mrs. Prosser, Mrs. Bickett and Mr. Moulaison