

GENERAL MONTESSORI GUIDELINES

- Research shows us that children who are relaxed and happy learn much more easily than those who feel stressed.
- Much of what young children learn can be picked up from you automatically through modeling.
- Children learn best when they do so at their own pace: learning and mastering the everyday things in life gives children confidence and confident children are ready to embrace challenges.
- Children need to make their own discoveries: learning how to give just enough help but not too much is an art-form: let children experience the joyfulness of discovering things and telling you all about it is an experience that cannot be lost.
- Children learn when they are interested: it may help to choose the right time of day when they are ready for something new and challenging. Things that just need practicing can be done at any time of the day. Be prepared to stop an activity if they are unwilling or becoming frustrated.
- Children learn by doing: the more active and involved they are, the more likely they are to become engaged and interested. Getting that balance right can be challenging at any time.
- Children need encouragement and recognition rather than praise or treats. Focusing on extrinsic rewards takes away from the intrinsic value of learning. Use phrases that recognize effort “that took a long time, you must be happy to have completed it” or “that wasn’t easy but you kept going”.
- Mistakes are an opportunity for learning. When children make a mistake, it shows that they are encountering ideas, actions, skills and thoughts that are new. It is important to cultivate a positive attitude to these ‘mistakes’ and help your child feel that it is fine if they make a mistake and they can just try again and will gradually gain mastery of the activity.

And some key Montessori principles:

- **Repetition:** Allow children to repeat an activity as needed.
- **Movement:** This is the way young children develop. Encourage movement during the day at all times.
- **Choice:** Children learn best when they have chosen an activity. If a child is struggling to choose an activity, you can give a (limited) choice “would you like to do this or this”
- **Observation:** Take time to just watch and observe what the children are doing. You can see what they are interested in, what they enjoy, where they need more help or repetition, what distracted them, what they concentrated on and much more. You will be surprised what you discover.