



WALDEN GREEN
MONTESSORI

discipline
laughter
love
decisions
fun
responsibility
pain
advice
parenting
patience
joy
struggle
choices
exhaustion

MONTESSORI PARENTING RESOURCES for our beloved Walden Green Families

- MONTESSORI CHILD DEVELOPMENT TIPS
- CULTIVATING ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS
- 5 EFFECTIVE PARENTING STRATEGIES
- PROBLEM-SOLVING WHEEL
- PEACEMAKER'S STEPS
- AT-HOME REFLECTIVE SLIP



Child Development Tips for Montessori Families

The suggestions outlined here are a culmination of these efforts and embody the core tenets of the Montessori education philosophy: multi-sensory learning, age-appropriate activities, independence, freedom and responsibility, structure and limits, environmental order and beauty, and grace and courtesy. Raising a joyful, focused, compassionate, creative, and curious individual is a journey filled with many gifts. The time-tested, research-supported guidance below will help you as parents to optimize your children's intellectual, emotional, physical, and moral development and support them along this wonderful journey. Hopefully, these insights and suggestions will serve as a valuable resource for you and your family.

SIX TO TWELVE YEARS

1. Seek to understand your child's developmental changes.

Your child from 3-6 years of age was interested in absorbing information and asking the question "what" in an effort to label new information. Now your child begins to ask much more elaborate, analytical questions: why, where, when, and how. He becomes curious about culture, history, animals, botany, geography, and many more topics. His analytic nature will be accompanied by a growing interest in his peers and wanting to work in groups. Your child in his first stage of development (0 to 6 years of age) was busy creating himself, now your child will be focused on the outside world and his place in the community. This focus on the group will lead to a better understanding of acceptable behavior as defined by cultural norms. This new, moral development will give rise to questions regarding right and wrong, justice, and compassion.

2. Understand that your child will have a distinctive learning style and approach based on his genetic propensities and his environment.

Your child has a range of capabilities dictated by his genetics that can be influenced by his environment. The smarter the environment, the stronger his skills and abilities. Seek to understand how your child's brain should be functioning from year to year within the systems of learning defined by Levine (2002). Addressing the eight core cognitive functions possessed by every individual, these systems provide the foundation for how and what a person learns:

- a. **Language.** Sensitivity to spoken and written language including the ability to process the 44 different sounds of the English language.
- b. **Sequential Ordering.** Responsible for carrying out mathematical problem solving and analyzing information and directions (e.g., most instructions and geometry).
- c. **Spatial Ordering.** This is the ability to visualize patterns and configurations. This is important for math and science as well as picturing images when reading.
- d. **Motor.** The connections between the brain and various muscles.
- e. **Social Thinking.** The ability to understand and engage in a cooperative manner with others.
- f. **Attention Control.** The administrative bureau of the brain. It regulates and controls learning and behavior. It directs the distribution of mental energy and causes your child to finish what he starts, stay alert, and remain focused while filtering out distractions.
- g. **Higher Thinking.** This includes understanding more abstract concepts, thinking critically and creatively, and using problem solving skills.
- h. **Memory.** This includes immediate memory, short-term memory, long-term memory, semantic (or generic) memory, episodic memory (for particular events), procedural memory (knowing "how"), and propositional memory (knowing "that...").

These systems deteriorate when underused. Your child may need your support if he is feeling inadequate in a particular area of learning.



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3. Learn appropriate developmental milestones for your child's age group rather than fall victim to social pressure from your and your child's peer groups.

4. Treat your child as a thinking person.

You will increase his confidence by engaging in serious discussions and debates.

5. Let your child see and experience the world on his own terms (e.g., climb trees, get dirty, etc.).

6. Create a climate of mutual respect.

Create and maintain a reciprocal avenue of open, honest communication with your child so he feels welcome to initiate discussions concerning sensitive, personal issues. Be a good listener and model the art of communication.

7. Educate your child about sexuality/drugs/alcohol as the importance of peer influences grow.

8. Maintain consistency with discipline and parenting styles.

9. Spend time as a family.

Have nightly dinners and play board games and card games as a family.

10. Strive to increase your child's self-sufficiency.

For instance, have your child make his own appointments for items like dental care and hair cuts.

11. Allow your child to deal with his own social conflict whenever possible.

12. Continue to offer more freedoms while highlighting the greater responsibility associated with them in the process.

Have your child share in the cooking, shopping, gardening, and cleaning. Encourage him to pack his own lunch, keep track of his own belongings, and honor his promises.

13. Encourage your child's exploration of the world outside of the home and the classroom as he continues to orient himself to his culture and society.

He will gain a growing understanding of what is typical and acceptable behavior in society at large.

14. Have your child arrange excursions to cultural events.

Schedule outings to concerts, ballets, symphonies, plays, and art exhibits to broaden your child's exposure.

15. Involve your child in party/event planning for holidays and birthday celebrations.

16. Follow-up on your child's spontaneous interests by arranging trips to the zoo, library, museum, mountains, etc.

It is important to expose your child to a variety of rich experiences.



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17. Encourage social interactions with others in the community through various forms including sports, clubs, and community service.

One activity per week is plenty.

18. Help your child go into the community to discover it and to experience the satisfaction of providing a service.

Consider opportunities at nursing homes, political offices, conservations centers, theaters, museums, and universities.

19. Help your child make contact with his role models: painters, musicians, teachers, writers, firefighters, or other professionals.

This will allow your child to better understand his opportunities and possibly find mentors.

20. Take family vacations that expose your child to different cultures and their unique attributes like food, art, language, and customs.

Study about the culture before you start the vacation.

21. Create a home library with reference materials covering a wide variety of subjects (e.g., history, biology, geography, outer space, etc.).

22. Set up a room with plenty of space for different collections and purchase and provide other tools for research such as bug nets, a microscope, notebooks, and a telescope.

Provide shoe boxes for your child to arrange and group items of interest.

23. Continue to read to your child and to have your child read to you.

24. Expose your child to good literature.

Fictional and non-fictional heroes and heroines are also important mentors for great accomplishments, big dreams, and strong character.

25. Restrict your child's use of television, cell phones, computers, and video games.

Remove computers and televisions from your child's room. Direct the child's energy to activities that emphasize problem solving, self motivation, and creativity.

26. Model a dynamic, active lifestyle and exercise with your child.

Encourage a healthy body through exercise, good eating and sleeping habits.

27. Provide time for silence and reflection.

Your child will consolidate information by reflecting on his experiences.

28. When the time comes, help guide your child into the discipline of homework.

Help establish work routines, time management skills, space to work, and balance for physical needs (e.g., snacks, down time, and sports).

29. Without creating undue pressure, let your child know that you believe in him and that he can achieve great things.

TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN YEARS

30. Respect your child's growing independence.

The period between ages 12 to 18 is one of intense self-discovery as the mind, body, friends, and professional ambitions take root. This journey requires independence as the child defines himself in the greater context of the world. He will become more aware and interested in global issues. This period may be marked by emotional and interpersonal turbulence accompanied by many physical changes. The maturing of the body and mind typically leads to insecurity, instability, restlessness, and lack of discipline – in short, a rebellious streak. Real experiences, requiring physical exertion provide the best kind of learning for your child at this age. Your job is to nurture self-confidence and self respect. It is important to be sensitive to changes in your child's appearance, the opinions of peers, and popularity.

31. Give your child space.

While continuing to support and nurture your child, let him make mistakes and learn by them. Expect respect, responsibility, and dependability. Continue to collaborate with your child about the structure and rules of the house. Be firm about enforcement.

32. Provide an emotionally safe home environment where your child feels free to discuss and explore parts of himself without judgment.

Actively listen to your child. This may include repeating part of your child's words or ideas in your response. Have an honest discussion about your child's physical changes through the adolescent maturation process.

33. Model and support healthy self-esteem by appreciating your child's differences, helping to develop his strengths, encouraging him to have his own passions, and supporting his "down time" to think.

34. Try to allow your child to follow his own rhythms in regard to eating and sleeping.

35. Know your child's friends and host them frequently.

36. Promote independence in daily life – cooking, cleaning, and caring for others.

37. Encourage entrepreneurship, economic independence, and responsibility in handling money and personal belongings.

38. Encourage your child's connection to a bigger world.

Have him read the newspaper and discuss world events. Among other things, continue to have your child attend cultural events, visit museums, and volunteer. Expect service to others and the community.



PARENTS WHO WANT TO RAISE KIDS WHO CAN REALLY SUCCEED IN LIFE SHOULD FOCUS ON CULTIVATING THESE LIFE SKILLS:

- **RESOURCEFULNESS.** Teaching kids how to self-soothe, acknowledging that there may be several ways to solve a problem, and making them search for a solution slightly outside of their comfort zone can help kids learn how to make the most out of the situations in which they find themselves. That, in turn, helps them to be successful regardless of which path they take in life. But be patient - children have limited resources, and it can take time to figure out what to do. It's tempting to try to rush them or, worse, save time by doing everything for them yourself.
- **ENTHUSIASM.** Without enthusiasm, kids are just going through the motions. One major parental pitfall is expecting your kids to automatically admire the same things you do. Instead of pushing your kids toward your own goals, observe their interests and remember that their aspirations don't have to be the same as yours.
- **CREATIVITY.** Academic excellence is all well and good, but some kids just aren't cut out for life on the Dean's list. The skills they learn from creative pursuits can help them learn how to think outside of the box, solve problems, and succeed in non-academic settings. Steer kids toward open-ended activities and offer plenty of positive feedback.
- **A STRONG WORK ETHIC.** In addition to focusing on effort, persistence, and discipline, do make sure to notice other components of a good work ethic like integrity or the ability to communicate and collaborate. Make sure that the work your child is expected to do is reasonable and be sure to show them that you can embrace hard work as well.
- **SELF-EFFICACY.** Along with having good self-esteem and self-control, self-efficacy (the belief that we have a measure of control over what we do with our lives) is crucial to success. Be mindful not to project your own anxiety as your child moves forward. Doing so prevents kids from pushing past existing boundaries and trying new things, and robs them of their ability to solve problems on their own.

We do not have to choose between a child's wellbeing and his/her success. Both are inside jobs. They are developed when kids are guided and encouraged to build a sense of self internally. Ultimately, it is only our children themselves who pass judgment on their success, or lack thereof, in their lives.



5 Effective Parenting Strategies

THE FOUR QUESTION CHALLENGE (REGARDING YOUR DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES)

1. DOES IT WORK?
2. IS IT RESPECTFUL?
3. HOW DOES IT HELP ME BE THE BEST PARENT I CAN BE?
4. WHAT DOES IT TEACH? (*IF YOU WANT A BEHAVIOR, YOU HAVE TO TEACH A BEHAVIOR*)

discipline = to disciple = to teach

STRATEGY 1: THE ONE MINUTE BEHAVIOR MODIFIER

Step One: Choose a behavior (one at a time)

Step Two: Give the behavior a name (specific and understandable)

Example: *“early exiting the conversation”*

Step Three: Use of the word “because”

Example: *“That doesn’t work with me **because...**” or “That is against the family rules **because...**”*

Step Four: Replace the old behavior for a new one

Example: *“Next time...”*

STRATEGY 2: THE DON'T ALTERNATIVE (REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF DIRECTIVES YOU GIVE)

1. Saying “don’t” doesn’t work

2. The human brain does not process the word **DON'T**

3. Saying “don’t” highlights what is coming next- *it plants an image in the mind*

Example: *“Don’t think of a small, blue shirt”*

4. Overused Phrases: *don’t talk, don’t be late, don’t forget, don’t run...*

5. Replace “DON'T” with “NEXT TIME”

Example: *“Next time take off your shoes before you walk across the room”*



STRATEGY 3: DESCRIBE, DESCRIBE, DESCRIBE

(teaching kids how to handle their feelings through your modeling)

STEP 1	Describe the situation	"There's a brand new baseball glove out in the rain in the backyard..."
STEP 2	Describe your feelings	"I'm upset..."
STEP 3	Describe the expectation	"Baseball gloves belong..."
STEP 4	Opportunity and responsibility	"So you can either put it away or..." (name a consequence)

6 R's OF A CONSEQUENCE		
1. REASONABLE	IF NOT #1-3 → THEN #4-6	4. RESISTANCE
2. RELATED TO THE ISSUE		5. REBELLION
3. RESPECTFUL DELIVERY		6. REVENGE FANTASY

STRATEGY 4: THE "I CAN'T" ELIMINATOR

1. Act as if you can (pretend/play like you can)
2. What if they start doing it wrong? (making mistakes is a part of the learning process)
3. Reduce the stigma of mistakes (the door of success is found in the hallway of failure)

STRATEGY 5: DESCRIPTIVE AND APPRECIATIVE PRAISE

THREE TYPES OF PRAISE

1. EVALUATIVE

Praise that evaluates the child's performance, effort, or end product
(Note: This type of praise has the potential to do the most damage)

2. DESCRIPTIVE

Praise that describes the product, act, performance, effort, etc. (you describe it, they self-evaluate)

3. APPRECIATIVE

Praise that shows our appreciation for their behavior

HOW OFTEN DO YOU SAY "GOOD JOB" TO YOUR CHILD? THE PHRASE ITSELF IS NOT BAD, HOWEVER, IT'S EXTREMELY OVERUSED AND IT USUALLY DOES NOT ACCOMPLISH THE JOB OF BUILDING A CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM.

PROBLEM-SOLVING WHEEL

Start



EXAMPLE:

"I noticed you were talking while we were in line so I thought you didn't care whether we went out to recess. That made me feel upset because I wanted to go play. I would like you to be quiet while we're in line, so is there anything I can do to help you be quiet when you need to be?"

Reconciliation

- A PEACEMAKER'S STEPS -

A ASK, "WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?"

B BRAINSTORM POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

C CAN THERE BE A COMPROMISE?

D DETERMINE BEST SOLUTION(S)

E EXPECTATIONS FOR BOTH SIDES

F FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER



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DATE:

SLIP #:

@ HOME REFLECTIVE SLIP

"GETTING TO THE HEART" QUESTIONS

What was going on?

What were you feeling/thinking while it was going on?

What did you do in response to how you were feeling/thinking?

Why did you do it? What were you seeking to accomplish?

What was the result of your choice?

IN ORDER TO REACH MY FULL POTENTIAL, I NEED TO WORK ON:

- ☐ being respectful
☐ demonstrating self-control
☐ following directions
☐ using my time wisely
☐ using the right voice level
☐ peaceful problem-solving
☐ being trustworthy
☐ other: _____

CONSEQUENCE/OUTCOME:

CHILD SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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