

## Busy Mom-isorri Preschool 3Yr Old Lesson Plans

This Montessori-based workplan for is designed for busy homeschool moms who do not want an hours-a-day preschool program, but still want a Montessori-inspired preschool at home.

We can't really replicate what goes on in a "real" Montessori school; there's a mind-boggling level of cooperation, interaction, and independence. But, we can sure use the all those learning materials and lessons!

I find that the most difficult part of implementing aspects of a Montessori preschool in my home is know WHAT TO DO WHEN. It's too fluid and overwhelming. So, based on the curriculum found in Gettmans' *Basic Montessori*, Bowman's *Montessori at Home*, and the information available at [www.infomontessori.com](http://www.infomontessori.com), I have put together a home pacing guide.

A "real" Montessori school is NOT a home, but many of the materials there are designed to mimic something at home. So, this guide makes special effort to reduce costs by eliminating materials that a school would buy to mimic what already exists at home.

Additionally, this guide makes special effort to reduce the space and storage required. The usual schoolroom age range requires that a wide spectrum of materials be available at all times, as children are at different levels. At home, however, this is not necessary. One only needs the current work on the shelf. Also, one can use a particular material for double duty, as there doesn't need to be enough materials to have all of the options out at once. No need to have enough trays and bowls for all of the transfer activities to be on the shelf everyday.

Now, none of this should be taken as Montessori gospel, as I am untrained in that field. My Master's (Counseling) did not cover Maria Montessori specifically, but I have come to appreciate her work greatly as a gentle, effective way to promote a child's early development.

I have made several alterations:

1) **I kept the material as concrete as possible:** Montessori work usually develops a currently needed skill based on content that will be useful later. However, if a material is pointing to content far too abstract to be processed anytime in the next few years, I substituted it. No puzzle maps of Asia for the kid who won't understand a map of his own bedroom for another three or more years. (Also saves a BUNCH of money. Those maps are pricey!)

2) **I pulled most Practical Life and Art materials from the school room and inserted them into daily life:** This eliminates messes happening when I'm not guarding the school area, and it gives me spontaneous ways to occupy my child during the day.

3) **I paced it out on a weekly, monthly basis.** Real Montessorians are quite resistant to putting a timeline on activities as it doesn't "follow the child". I agree, but homeschooling three older children doesn't leave a lot of brain power, so having a standardized pace helps me organize my shopping and shelf work. But, that doesn't mean I don't let a child who is struggling or sailing through slip ahead or behind in a particular activity sequence.

## Overview of the How-To

We do “formal” preschool time upstairs, for about an hour, 3 afternoons a week (or whenever we can find time together alone). Formal school time is for activities that involve materials on the shelves. However, MANY activities can be done anytime and fall outside of our formal school time. I will note those activities for you.

### Our School Year Day:

- Morning chores, food, grooming, etc.
- About 9:00, we pile onto the living room floor for big kid read aloud. The preschooler tags along with the coloring and legos or does one of the practical life or art activities at the kitchen table, or runs in and out the back door playing in the sand box. If she’s really obnoxious, we set her up with the chromebook on my bed.
- About 10:00, I call the “first baby sitter”, usually my 2GRDer. He takes bubble baths with her and generally runs around being fun while I work with the 4GRDer. The oldest works alone.
- About 11:00, the babysitters switch and I work with 2GRDer child while 4GRDer plays make-up, dress-up, does art with her, what-have-you.
- About noon, we all make lunch, after which the 2GRDer and 4GRDer are set free to play. Preschooler and I have “bottle and a story” which means we lay on my bed, she has a sippy cup of warm milk, and we read all her favorite books for 15-30 minutes. This is when I do lots of learning games with the books that will be described later.
- On days that I will be doing formal preschooling, MIL comes to get the big kids about 3:30. When preschooler wakes up, we head upstairs to “build towers”, which is code for shelf work. After an hour or so, we come down to the kitchen and she does art, practical life work, or helps me with the cleaning and food prep.
- In the evening, I generally have at least one more “bottle and a story” session with the preschooler.

### Summer:

- All big kids have computer-based review work to do 30 min a day.
- All big kids have require audio books for the afternoon.
- All big kids have a mandatory Outdoor Hour.
- “Bottle and a story” session seem to be more frequent in the summer as are “building tower” sessions, usually during big kid outdoor time, before the upstairs gets too hot.
- Kitchen table art and practical life work continues whenever she’s in the mood. Most days, the art supplies are never quite put away.

### **Formal Shelf Time Routine**

The day the child turns three (or a couple of months before because I'm excited), I set up the shelves.

**The first day**, I put familiar toys on the school shelves (so they don't look empty) and 3-4 Montessori activities. I do a presentation for one material and let him fool with it until he is done. This time together is almost wordless. Lots of smiling and nodding or shaking our heads no. **The only words I use in Period 1 are "this comes next" or "these are the same."** When he is no longer interested, we put it away. Then I present another activity or let him choose an old familiar toy. We go until one or both of us is tired.

Unlike a "normal" Montessori classroom, the child has my full attention, as long as he is engaging me in his work. If he ignores me, that's fine too. Unless he is damaging the item, I don't interfere. I just watch. If he's doing it wrong, I make a note to re-present it tomorrow.

**The next session**, I have added a few more activities to the shelves and removed more of the familiar toys. I do a presentation of each new material, unless he expresses interest in one he has already done. I let him go until he feels finished with the works.

**At the end of the first week or so**, the shelves will be fully stocked. I keep a weekly checklist of what we do so that I can make sure that I re-present anything that hasn't been touched, so that we have hit that category at least once. Usually, the child is happy just to be having me play with him, so he doesn't care that I picked an activity or two that day.

**At the end of each month**, I assess which shelf activities have been mastered and fallen out of favor. I advance/alter three mastered activities per day at the beginning of the next month and make the presentations. I might up the difficulty fastener work, change the contents of the sorting bag, switch out the classified pictures, etc. Notice, two things:

1. I'm not adding new activities. I won't move us into new Period 2 centers until we've pretty much worn out Period 1. That's for my sanity.
2. I don't vary current activities weekly. Monthly is enough; it gives time for me to see if a material truly needs replacing or if the child's interest just shifted for a couple of weeks.

**As the child passes into Period 2 later in the year**, the school area can get kind of crowded with the addition of the sandpaper letters, insets, red rods, box 3 color tablets, binomial cube, sound boxes, and puzzles. The sorting bags are replaced with sorting grains and the tactile boards are replaced with the tablets, but otherwise, this time of the year it's tight.

However, once the naming and distance work is mastered late in Period 2, the color materials fall out of favor, as do the touch boards, and other materials that have no further presentations. I begin to slowly pull them from the shelves. Sometimes a missing material is requested, so it reappears the next day. But as long as it goes unnoticed, it stays in storage.

## Informal Practical Life, Art, Cleaning Centers

The fact that these happen outside of formal school time doesn't mean that they aren't sequenced and organized. I still follow the sequences I have outlined on my checklists and keep weekly records, but the materials aren't out all day long.

In the kitchen I have a dollar store boot tray to contain the mess and TWO snap-top plastic bins. One contains **transfer work** and the other contains **art work**. At some point every day, she needs entertaining, asks for it, or I just wanna do it with her. I ask her, "Pouring or painting?" That's code in our house for either set, even though not all transfers are pouring and not all art is painting. Wherever she is in the transfer sequence, I set it up. If she chose art, I hold up two choices and she points.

For cleaning work, I have no special supplies stored. The "child-size" version has never captivated any of my kids. They won't use "their" broom or mop, they want mine. They will use a tiny dust broom/pan, and sometimes the small spray bottles, but usually the child uses the big spray bottles two-handed and the big broom with the step-on dust pan. I give the presentations in sequence and offer her some opportunities for practice, but after that, practice occurs naturally. Messes happen hourly around here. Cleaning chores are constant. No need to set out special activities for polishing a mirror, she's usually kissed up my floor length mirror with lipstick and "polishing" it is just part of the fun.

In the kitchen boxes:

**TRANSFER WORK:** I have some dedicated stuff like little bags of beans, rice, salt. I have any special pitchers, tongs, ramekins, that aren't in regular use in the home. I also have a shoelace for threading cheerios, cute sponges, her wavy cutters, and a turkey baster. Everything else is handy around the kitchen anyway and is used daily (hand beaters, cutting boards, wisks, spoons, little knives.)

**ART WORK:** I have brushes, watercolors, washable markers, a few tubs of playdoh, some other versions of washable paint, travel sewing scissors for cutting work, stickers, an aquadoodle, and some water painting books. On the desk by the kitchen table, I have a rolling paper dispenser from Ikea, the dollar store boot tray, an acrylic mirror and stand (we love to paint and sticker ourselves.) I keep back ups of all these things in my closet; she goes through a set of water colors almost weekly.

\*Full list of needed supplies for Period 1 and 2 follow later. Don't try to write it all down now.

## 12 Birds With One Stone

I want to address something that is done throughout all the preschool years and does not have a strict progression of shelf work. If you do this, it also eliminates the need for piles of other lessons and cards. Major time saver, major money saver.

### **Repeated Reading Daily** (Outside formal school time)

*Materials Needed: books*

Gather a collection of rhyming Seuss and other classics from the library and try them out on your child for a few weeks to see what sticks. Repeated reading is a major part of our preschool language program, so make sure you own ten or so daily standbys.

For example, my child MAKES me read *Put Me in the Zoo* almost daily. She learned most of her colors from repeated reading of that book. She likes to finish the sentences or correct my color name “mistakes.”

*Ten Apples Up on Top* was her favorite counting book, but lately she wants to talk about emotions and facial expressions instead. “He’s mad. He’s happy.” “Now the bear is mad.” “Now we’re all friends!”

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* is often ended with singing a days of the week song, and during the reading, we like to count the fruits eaten each day while sticking our fingers in the holes.

*Ain’t Gonna Paint No More* begins with a one page room orientation (we point) and then she practices her body parts. After reading it, we make up new verses to include other parts and have tickle time. (We are a household where painting/drawing on self with anything washable is permitted. It requires a certain tacky sense of humor to not want to set this book on fire. )

Other favorites are *Go Dog Go*, *The Foot Book*, *Hop on Pop*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, *Cat in the Hat*, *Where is the Green Sheep?*, *Jamberry*, *Bear Snores On*, *One Fish Two Fish*, *Brown Bear Brown Bear*, each of which are great for numbers, nouns, opposites, colors, prepositions, emotions, phonetic I Spy (explained later), and all kinds of other vocabulary practice.

Through this repeated reading time together, we have blasted through lots of the usual preschool goals with minimum effort. Most of this is accomplished by pausing too long or reading it “wrong” so they have to fill in, which is great for auditory memory and vocabulary practice. But of course, some days, she just wants to hear it again and not do any “work.” Since we do it all the time, there’s no pressure.

### **New Material**

For variety, I find that the reading recommendations and checklists available from Sonlight for 3/4yr olds are wonderful. I add a few each week, just to keep new material flowing and see if we can discover some future favorites. I would repeat it next year too.

## PERIOD ONE

### LANGUAGE CURRICULUM 1

The sensorial work series can be overwhelming, so I'm going to start with the Language work to ease you into these ideas and habits of presentation.

This series corresponds to the Gettman Period 1:

1. Classified pictures
2. I Spy
3. Vocabulary

#### **1. Classified Objects/Pictures: (Used at least weekly, changed monthly)**

*Materials Needed: Stacks of wordless picture cards that can be grouped by category. (Presentation, Exercises 1-2 in Gettman, 134.)*

This exercise isolates the experience of categories, not new objects and vocabulary. Next period, he will begin sorting them, but for now, it's just getting used to seeing them grouped together. The child should already know the names of most everything in the pile.

In a regular classroom, there are many stacks of wordless picture cards for familiar objects found in various rooms in the home. But you ARE at home, so you have several options:

#### **Option A: Drawer Baskets**

*Materials Needed: objects from home, 2-3 cheap baskets, color pictures of open drawers in contact paper, laminated, or plastic sleeves cut from cheap purse picture albums*

Take a picture of your silverware drawer, bathroom drawer, or whatever else you have that contains objects that could be reasonably gathered in a basket. Place the picture in the basket along with the objects. Allow the child to look through each "category" of objects.

#### **Option B: Classified Pictures of Your Own Home.**

*Materials Needed: cheap basket or box, many pictures of your home protected as described above, rubber bands or photo boxes.*

Not every home is the same, so the photos depend on YOUR home. The easiest option is to take ten pictures of objects in every room of your home, print or have them developed, protect them in some version of plastic, and rubber band them together by room and keep 2-3 sets at a time a dollar store basket.

#### **Option C: Generic Classified Pictures**

*Materials Needed: basket or box, rubber bands, stack of generic classified pictures*

There are many versions of these online. Also, Lauri/Smethport NOUNS Flashcards (~\$11) may work well for you. Gettman (p 133) recommends cutting out magazine pictures.

**Notes:**

We change these MONTHLY. Eventually, you will run out of rooms, or your child may just find that whole subject uninteresting. We also do animals, like a collection of fish or bird pictures and having the child look through those. We do this with our local animals and plants that the child has seen around, however, *not everyone is surrounded with flora and fauna*. Whatever is predominate in your child's experience is good for this exercise. If you are an artist, the child may already be familiar with your supplies and taking pictures of those can be one category. If you build a great deal, your carpentry tools can be a familiar category. Anything with which the child is FAMILIAR is the key. You can use pictures or actual objects depending on size, availability, and budget.

**2. I Spy: (Used almost DAILY, outside formal school time)**

*No special materials are necessary*, unless you just WANT to have a prepared pile of objects in a basket. (Presentation, Exercises 1-3, Gettman, 136.)

**The I Spy work is some of the most powerful language work you can do with your child.**

Introducing your child to phonetic sounds and segmenting words makes the later letter work *easy*. Too often, the symbol, sound, and segmenting work are introduced together, which just makes it harder on everyone.

For this period, you are just doing the beginning sound of a single, familiar object (for which he has been saying the name easily *for ages*; we aren't teaching vocabulary.) You can do this by pointing at the answer in the book or the object in your hand.

We almost exclusively do this for whatever books she's has me reading repeatedly (usually rhyming.) While I read, I pause before a word and *point at the answer* in the illustration. "I will not eat them in a house, I will not eat them with a mm-mm-mm..." I let her fill in "mouse." At this early stage, we are just drawing attention to sounds and that they can be said alone.

After he has mastered the first version with a great variety of sounds, start using two objects in your hand or in the illustrations. Holding an apple and a ball, you might say, "I spy...something that starts with buh...buh." (Hopefully, you will still get "ball" though in the early stages of this I often get "buh, buh, buh, apple!") For doing it with a book, I show the page and read "I would eat them with a guh-guh-guh..." I pause and look at the book like I'm thinking about it. I point at the mouse and say, "Guh, guh,...mouse?" She shakes her head no. "Guh, guh...goat?" She shakes her head yes. After days of this, I can say "Guh, guh," point at the two images like I'm deciding which one starts with "guh", look at her expectantly, and she'll fill in "goat."

After weeks of mastering stage 2, you can use a group of objects and have the child play the same game. For the book version, I pause on a page with a limited number of objects and do not point at anything. "Would you eat them in a huh, huh..." and see if she can pick "house" off the page without help.

At no point do you try to introduce the real names or symbols for the letters. That comes later.

### **3. Vocabulary exercises (Weekly, sometimes outside of formal school time)**

*No special materials are necessary.*

Just your pointer finger and the object in question. We first teach the child his own body parts, *using a 3-step lesson* (Gettman, 69-72 or Bowman, 42-45.) Next, do something else familiar, like his clothing.

Then we progress to weekly Room Walks. We like doing general room like ceiling, wall, floor, door. I progress through the *3-step lesson* before I go to a new room. This may take days or weeks. It is important to avoid the temptation to mix the vocabulary and classified card exercises. No teaching the “naming” while the child is experiencing the categories through the picture cards. No teaching about things “belonging” together, when you’re doing room walks. We **isolate** skills inside activities, not mix them.

#### **End Notes:**

Each of these exercises (Vocabulary, Classified Cards, I Spy) are their own category of work and can be started simultaneously. They are ordered within themselves, not in relation to one another. Use the checklist at the end of this document to keep track of where you are.

### **SENSORIAL CURRICULUM 1**

This series again corresponds to Gettman’s Period One. For a good discussion of purchasing cost effective materials, see Bowman, 48-49.

1. Cylinder blocks (tall/short, thick/thin)
2. Pink tower (grading large/small, prompt only with “what comes next?”)
3. Color tablets, box 1 and 2 (color matching, not naming yet)
4. Presentation tray of geometric cabinet (feeling in and out, matching shapes)
5. Touch boards (just experiential, rough/smooth)
6. Presentation 1 of geometric solids (exploring shape stereognostically, surface/edges)
7. Stereognostic bags (sorting prisms by feeling contrasting shapes)

Before age 3, hopefully the child has already had a wide sensorial experience of the world. He has already seen many colors and sizes, touched many different textures, heard many sounds, tasted many flavors, and made many physical movements. We are not adding new experiences this year, but instead beginning the development of close, organized, sensory observation and concentration. Since all information is stored in the mind as a sense image, this work will serve the child throughout his life.

We start with nameless matching exercises for vision and touch. “These are the same.” There is no naming going on yet, just an organized sensorial experience of sameness.

Sometimes Mama wants to hurry past this experience and get right to teaching the color names and using lots of language, especially if the child already knows some of it, but during the first presentations, I believe it lays a better foundation if mom uses few words and models silent



concentration. Close sensory observation is required for accurate description. Too often in our culture, people start talking about something before they've closely examined it with their full concentration.

The classic Montessori materials are mentioned below, however, if you are on a strict budget, know that they are not magic. The key is that they isolate the contrast of one sense aspect at a time. The graded blocks aren't ALSO multi-texture or multi-colored. That is hard to find elsewhere, and very important. The child has already had plenty of garbled sensory experiences. It's hard to concentrate on "thick versus thin" when there are flashing lights, contrasting colors, bells and music, or texture variety pulling the child's focus in other directions.

### **1. Cylinder Blocks (Used at least weekly)**

(Presentation, Exercises 1-2, Gettman, 72-73)

I do not own the full size cylinder blocks. The toddler versions (~\$25) are all we have and have proved sufficient to the time that the child is interested in this material. It has been suggested that one purchase one of the large sets in lieu of the toddler set. The larger block is impressive, but "expires" at an earlier age than the less impressive toddler block set. One can only do the earliest exercise with one block, as the later, more complicated work ones involves 2-4 blocks at a time. Bowman (p118) has several DIY suggestions for this type of dimension work without the Montessori materials, including matching socket sets to printed images.

### **2. Pink Tower (Used at least weekly)**

(Presentation, Exercises 1-2, Gettman, 74-75)

The pink tower (~\$35), unless you have access to carpentry equipment, is best purchased. One could substitute hollow nesting blocks, the main disadvantage being that they will need to be wrapped or painted to eliminate the visual distractions of colors and symbols. Also, they lack the basic experience of weight change corresponding to size change.

### **3. Color Boxes 1, 2 (Used at least weekly, increased monthly)**

(Presentation, Exercises 1-2, Gettman, 80-82)

The color tablets need not be bought at all. There are many DIY versions online. It is merely a matching exercise. As long as the color is isolated, you're good. People have used paint chip samples, colored floss, painted pegs, spools from their own sewing collection, what-have-you. I laminated the free printed version from Montessori Print Shop. However, if you do not already own a color printer, that is not cost effective. If you do have the printer already, please treat yourself to a home laminator from Walmart for \$20. You will wear it out!

### **4. Geometric Presentation Tray (Used at least weekly)**

(Presentation, Exercise 1, Gettman, 84-87)

The presentation tray for the geometric cabinet is just a circle, square, and triangle puzzle, easily found anywhere, however, again color is usually a distraction. I used the colored puzzles I already owned anyway. But, my favorite solution is to purchase the plastic Montessori insets from Didax (~\$20) which can be used as puzzles or for the later metal inset and geometric work.

### **5. Tactile Boards (Used at least weekly)**

(Presentation, Exercises 1, Gettman, 99-100)

The touch boards (not to be confused with the tactile tablets used later) are another super-easy DIY . The dollar store has graded packages of sandpaper that can be cut and glued to cheap, smooth wooden boards (<\$1) from the craft store. However, note that they may need to be sprayed with workable fixative as the moisture from the paper backing comes through and loosens the larger sand granules.

### **6. Geometric Solids (Used at least weekly)**

(Presentation, Exercises 1, Gettman, 110-112)

The geometric solids will have to be purchased. There is a “steriognostic bag”(~\$12) available from most Montessori suppliers that has 2-inch versions. (You will use that bag throughout preschool.) The preferred large versions of the solids are available through Montessori suppliers (~\$50) or online at Learning Resources(~\$30, but plastic and multi-colored).

### **7. Steriognostic Bags (Used at least weekly, changed monthly)**

(Presentation, Exercises, Gettman, 115-117)

The steriognostic bags could also be done easily at home. Any small bags or small pillow cases will work and any assortment of prisms will do. If you have toys that use a collection of spheres, cubes, rectangular blocks, etc., that will work just fine for matching or sorting. It also doesn't matter what color the objects are as this work is done without looking. If your child finds it difficult to close his eyes or look at the ceiling, you may want to get a sleep mask from Walmart to use as a blindfold.

### **Holders**

Any work that you have made, will not come with the accompanying Montessori “**box**”, so I recommend **dollar store baskets, boxes**, and craft-foam-lined **cookie sheets** for holding any DIY color tablets, touch boards, loose insets or geometric solids on your shelves. There are several grades of quality in dollar store containers. Play with them to find the sturdiest.

## **MOTOR SKILLS CURRICULUM 1**

This series is a conglomeration of several sources, but loosely corresponds to Gettman.

1. Self-care
2. Cleaning
3. Food Prep
4. Transfers
5. Fasteners
6. Scissors
7. Threading/lacing
8. Painting
9. Playdoh
10. Gross Motor

Often, movement is a neglected area of intellectual development. However, it should be noted that our language centers in the brain are not connected to our mouths as much as our hands.

Hand strength affects language. Occupational therapists have known for ages that weird stuff is connected all over our bodies and working our muscles helps our brain process intellectual material. Ever met someone who thinks better after a brisk walk? While scrubbing? Working in the yard? Yes. If you want all of the wonderful brain learning to stick, we have to strengthen, refine, and use all those lovely muscles, and not just the ones that give us a good pencil grip. That is important too, but gross motor *heavy* work is a real developmental kicker.

The order of our family presentations can be found on my exercise sheets. Since you are home, you may have a different list than I, so be sure to download the Excel version of my checklist and adjust it for your family. (Many options, Bowman, 64)

**1. Self-Care: (At least weekly, usually outside of formal schooling)**

*No special materials needed.* (Presentations, Bowman, 100-101)

Self-care is useful to the child, but more importantly engages his interest, concentration, giving us an easy-peasy path to motor skill practice. Brushing hair requires all kinds of attention and coordination, especially if you're a little girl with long hair! There are a variety of presentations available online, however, we find that many of the at home routines are not practiced in the classroom. Therefore, my list has more to do with what a child is expected to do at home.

**2. Cleaning: (At least weekly, usually outside of formal schooling)**

*No special materials needed.* You *could* get child-sized supplies. I did, but my kids have always preferred the ones I actually use in the home (many options, Bowman, 70-73.)

Spills are the main object of cleaning training at this level in our home. Apart from that, the child participates in many tasks around the home. For example, when the laundry is switched from the washer to the dryer, the toddler is invited to take the washing from my hand, put it in the dryer, shove it to the back, and shut the door when finished. (Lots of lovely heavy work involved!) In folding, she is invited to push baskets to the correct room and possibly carry folded towels (depending on my tolerance for refolding and imprecise stacking.)

She is also included in any stirring in the kitchen or opening of containers, or anything that her little hands wish to do. She gradually takes over larger and larger parts of tasks as she is able.

\*It is important to note that NONE of this is genuinely helpful to the adult until the child is MUCH older, like 10 years old. Also, the child may wish to repeat it over and over even though the actual chore is completed. One must not invite the child to participate unless the adult is prepared for this to be learning time, not "get it done" time. Once the wash is in the dryer, she may want to take it out and put it back in several more times before she feels "finished." When the kneading is done, she may need something else to knead to feel done.

**3. Food Prep (At least weekly, usually outside of formal schooling)**

*Materials Needed: Tiny spreading knives, Walmart metal ramekins*

Food and knives are most fascinating and the child will work with them for ages. We use the small spreading knife from Montessori services and Walmart \$1 stack of metal ramekins for jelly and butter for spreading. This is usually done at the kitchen table while I am preparing other meals, not upstairs in the school area.

#### **4. Transfers (At least weekly, usually outside of formal schooling)**

*Materials Needed: \$store boot tray, sponge, baster, shot glasses, little metal creamers (Amazon) or handled measuring cups, small tongs, tweezers, tiny spoon, little ramekins and bowls...much of which may already be in the home. (See Bowman, 74-77)*

The transfer series I use is **straight from Bowman (74-77)** and take the child through a whole series of grasps all the way down to the writing grasp. Bowman's pictures are fantastic.

I find that a **dollar store boot tray** at the kitchen table is best for all of this work. I don't keep the transfer work out. I simply say, "Do you want to pour?" or respond by presenting it when she's doing it with her cereal and juice or other inappropriate medium.

#### **5. Fasteners (At least weekly, usually DURING formal schooling)**

*No special materials necessary...maybe. (Detailed button presentation, Gettman 44-46)*

This is more fine motor work, but also transfers to the child's independence. I have seen many DIY versions of the **dressings boards**. Also, one could just dress a teddy bear in an appropriate child's outfit featuring the correct fastener. Bowman 104-105)

Another option is the Melissa and Doug basic skills board, but there is only one repetition of each skill, they are mixed on the board, and the pieces must be glued down to be truly effective for this work. My youngest worked just fine with this board and made the transfer to real life quite effectively, doing and undoing her father's buttons as she sat on his lap, doing and undoing buttons on her own polo shirts. However, it's not ideal. Isolating the task is best.

Also, many of these fasteners may already be on toys in your home. She long ago mastered click buckles with a buckly-boo she got for her 2nd birthday. And stationary velcro (no threading) and snaps were mastered on her own crocs and tennis shoes. If you have these items in the home, they can be introduced informally (church is a *great* time for focused quiet buckle and snap shoe practice) or set on a tray in the school room.

#### **6. Scissor Work (At least weekly, usually outside of formal schooling)**

*Materials needed: travel sewing scissors, paper strips*

Gettman has this work in Period 2, but I find that if one uses the tiny travel sewing scissors, the child may begin earlier. If you wish to do this in the formal school time, you will need a dollar store tray and a little Walmart ramekin for chopped bits.

#### **7. Yarn Work (At least weekly, in and out of formal school time)**

*Materials Needed: Laces, beads or cereal to thread, shapes to lace (Bowman 79-80)*

This is part of Bowman's sewing series. Anything with holes will work. Candy and cereal are especially fun and can be tied into a necklace for a snack. We like the Lauri foam lacing shapes.

**8. Painting (At least weekly, usually outside of formal schooling)**

*Materials Needed: the boot tray, plenty of dollar store washable paints, brushes, paper, and a small cup for water.*

We do this at the kitchen table anytime she asks. The roll of paper stays out, but the paints and the brushes are out of reach.

**9. Play-doh (At least weekly, usually outside of formal schooling)**

*Materials Needed: playdoh (Many exercises, Bowman 83-84)*

This we also do at the kitchen table on the boot tray I keep mentioning. As the child's hand strength increases, move him up to harder mediums, like clay.

**10. Gross Motor (At least weekly, usually outside of formal schooling)**

*Materials Needed: tape, other odd household items (Exercise options, Bowman, 65-69)*

I gathered this series from occupational therapy sources. Apart from the Walking the Line exercises (requires taped ellipse on the floor and odd household items to carry), which are great for vestibular perception, I haven't seen a great deal of these exercises in Montessori series, however, it is still important. Gross motor work is the foundation of all other developmental processing.

**GRACE AND COURTESY 1 (Weekly, in and out of formal schooling)**

My husband and I never run out of energy for installing politeness. RUDE is about the awfulest thing you can call someone in our home. We never stop policing words, tone, and behavior. The exercises in Period 1 lay the foundation for a harmonious homelife. All of the exercises and presentations listed on sequence can be found at [www.infomontessori.com](http://www.infomontessori.com).

We do this work in and out of formal school time. It never stops. Often, a child is not meaning to be rude and only needs to be taught the correct phrase or routine to navigate social interactions smoothly.

For a variety of other grace and courtesy lessons, please check Bowman, Gettman, and Deb Chitwood's e-book from [www.livingmontessorinow.com](http://www.livingmontessorinow.com).

**WHERE IS THE MATH?**

A child at this level is working on pre-math skills and careful counting. Count everything! But apart from that, pre-math skills are hidden in every other category: sorting, classifying, grouping, patterns, grading...all of it supports math development later. But formal math won't start until the child is ready for the symbol work.

## SHOPPING LIST

*Montessori at Home* e-book by Bowman  
*Basic Montessori* by Gettman  
Two bottom shelves or one small bookcase  
Lots of Dr. Seuss or other rhyming classics  
Several Walmart mats

### LANGUAGE 1

5-10 sets of 10 wordless category picture cards, rubber bands, and \$store basket

### SENSORIAL 1

Cylinder blocks set (\$100+) or single or toddler blocks (\$25 from IFIT)  
Pink tower (\$30+)  
DIY printed color tablets box 1, 2 and holder  
DIY tactile boards and holder (I used \$.69 Michael's plaques, \$store sandpaper pack)  
Geometric solids and basket  
Shapes puzzle (circle, square, triangle) or plastic Insets Shapes from Didax  
Small bags and prisms, or shapes to match blind  
Sleep mask, if necessary

### MOTOR SKILLS

tape for floor ellipse  
verify that you have material for shoe velcro, click buckles, big buttons, closed bottom zippers.  
basket for fastener work  
beads and laces for threading, holder

### THINGS KEPT IN THE KITCHEN

two lidded containers for art and motor supplies  
small dustpan/wisk broom combo  
small spray bottle  
Walmart \$1 stack of metal ramekins  
\$store boot tray  
verify that you have sponge, baster, beans, rice, and salt in the home  
small spreading knife  
shot glasses or other small cups  
small scissors found in travel sewing kits  
string and cereal for lacing  
\$store washable paints, brushes  
lots of paper  
cheap play-doh and clay

**\*On the next two pages you will find my weekly checklist and Period 1 sequence. Each week, I write where we are in the sequence next to “current lesson” on the weekly checklist. Several activities on the weekly chart don’t begin until Period 2, but I didn’t want separate sheets.**

Preschool Periods 1-2

WEEK:

LANGUAGE/MATH EXERCISES  
READ ALOUD ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I SPY ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

COUNTING ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

VOCABULARY ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*CLASSIFIED CARDS ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*SILENCE GAME ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*SANDPAPER LETTERS ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*METAL INSETS ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

SPEECH QUESTIONING ○ ○ ○ ○

\*CULTURE ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

PRACTICAL EXERCISES  
GRACE ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

SELF-CARE ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

CLEANING ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

FOOD PREP ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

TRANSFERS ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*FASTENERS ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

SCISSORS ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

PAINTING ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

PLAY DOUGH ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

GROSS MOTOR ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

SENSORIAL EXERCISES  
\*KNOBBED CYLINDERS ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*BUILDING (tower, stair, rods) ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*COLOR BOXES ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*GEOMETRIC CABINET ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*TOUCH BOARDS/TABLETS ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*GEOMETRIC SOLIDS ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*STERIOGNOSTIC SORTING ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*SOUND BOXES ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*BINOMIAL CUBE ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

\*CAREFUL COUNTING ○ ○ ○ ○  
Current lesson:

Symbol Explanation

Work with 5 check circles is done almost daily. Work with 3 check circles is done at least weekly.

Work with asterisks is done during formal school time. Work with no asterisk is done anytime, often to occupy her.

# SCOPE AND SEQUENCE PERIOD 1

## GRACE

greeting	<input type="checkbox"/>
thank you	<input type="checkbox"/>
please	<input type="checkbox"/>
you're welcome	<input type="checkbox"/>
excuse me	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm sorry	<input type="checkbox"/>
introducing self	<input type="checkbox"/>
yawn/cough	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>

## SELF-CARE

managing stools	<input type="checkbox"/>
hand washing	<input type="checkbox"/>
teeth brushing	<input type="checkbox"/>
getting dressed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>

## CLEANING

put away shelf work	<input type="checkbox"/>
tidying toys	<input type="checkbox"/>
dry object spills	<input type="checkbox"/>
fine, dry spills	<input type="checkbox"/>
wet spills	<input type="checkbox"/>
sticky spills	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>

## FOOD PREP

spreading jam	<input type="checkbox"/>
cut & spread butter	<input type="checkbox"/>

## TRANSFERS

whole hand: sponge	<input type="checkbox"/>
whole hand: baster	<input type="checkbox"/>
c-grasp: pour beans	<input type="checkbox"/>
c-grasp: pour rice	<input type="checkbox"/>
c-grasp: pour salt	<input type="checkbox"/>
c-grasp: pour water	<input type="checkbox"/>
handles: beans	<input type="checkbox"/>
handles: rice	<input type="checkbox"/>
handles: salt	<input type="checkbox"/>
handles: water	<input type="checkbox"/>

## FASTENERS

shoe velcro	<input type="checkbox"/>
snaps	<input type="checkbox"/>
big buttons	<input type="checkbox"/>
click buckles	<input type="checkbox"/>
zip shoes or pants	<input type="checkbox"/>

## SILENCE GAME

Whispering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bells	<input type="checkbox"/>
Candles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extending the time	<input type="checkbox"/>

## SCISSORS

Bits from strips	<input type="checkbox"/>
short lines	<input type="checkbox"/>

## PAINTING

finger paint	<input type="checkbox"/>
dot markers	<input type="checkbox"/>
fat brushes	<input type="checkbox"/>

## PLAY DOUGH

balls	<input type="checkbox"/>
snakes	<input type="checkbox"/>
cutting	<input type="checkbox"/>

## YARN WORK

threading	<input type="checkbox"/>
lacing	<input type="checkbox"/>

## GROSS MOTOR

managing mats	<input type="checkbox"/>
walk on the line (OTL)	<input type="checkbox"/>
dry carrying OTL	<input type="checkbox"/>
wet carrying OTL	<input type="checkbox"/>
tip toe OTL	<input type="checkbox"/>
stand 5+ sec on 1 leg	<input type="checkbox"/>
hop on 1 foot	<input type="checkbox"/>
stairs w/alternate feet	<input type="checkbox"/>
jump 12in w/both feet	<input type="checkbox"/>
gallop	<input type="checkbox"/>

## CLASSIFIED CARDS

look through sets 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
look through sets 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
look through sets 5-7	<input type="checkbox"/>
look through sets 7-10	<input type="checkbox"/>

## I SPY: BEGINNING SOUNDS

single object in hand	<input type="checkbox"/>
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz	
pair of objects	<input type="checkbox"/>
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz	
three objects	<input type="checkbox"/>
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz	

## VOCABULARY

child body parts	<input type="checkbox"/>
child clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>
room orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
bedroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
bathroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
living room	<input type="checkbox"/>
yard	<input type="checkbox"/>

## KNOBBED CYLINDERS

block 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
block 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
block 3	<input type="checkbox"/>
block 4	<input type="checkbox"/>

## PINK TOWER

build	<input type="checkbox"/>
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## COLOR BOXES

match box 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
match 3 pairs box 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
match 6 pairs box 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
match all	<input type="checkbox"/>

## PRESENTATION TRAY

feeling shape/recess	<input type="checkbox"/>
remove and replace	<input type="checkbox"/>

## TOUCH BOARDS

explore rough/smooth	<input type="checkbox"/>
explore graded board	<input type="checkbox"/>

## GEOMETRIC SOLIDS

explore surface/edge	<input type="checkbox"/>
match the bases	<input type="checkbox"/>
explore under cloth	<input type="checkbox"/>

## STERIOGNOSTIC SORTING

matching	<input type="checkbox"/>
sorting	<input type="checkbox"/>