

Our World at Small World



WHAT DID WE DO THIS MONTH? STEP INTO OUR WORLD AT SMALL WORLD!

Dear Parent(s),

We hope you and your children have all had a fantastic start to our summer program! From May 15th - June 15th, our students and faculty have been keeping busy with many exciting events and activities. This past month we successfully said goodbye to our beloved graduates and subsequently welcomed in many wonderful new families to our Summer of STEM and Space!

On May 16th we began our Parent-Teacher Conferences. We are thankful to all of the parents that were able to meet with their child's lead teachers during this time and celebrate the milestones that they have reached over the course of this past academic year. Additionally, we conducted our Open House on May 25th, where we gave many of your children the opportunity to showcase their progress in the classroom to you firsthand. Finally, we finished the 2021-2022 academic year with a spectacular graduation ceremony. Students from the primary classrooms at both of our campuses came together to perform selections from "The Greatest Showman" as a tribute to celebrate our outstanding graduates.

On Monday, June 6th we began our Summer of STEM and Space program! From the beginning of June until the end of July, students are getting the opportunity to not just learn about the fascinating facts of space, but to conduct their own science experiments in the classroom.

It is our aim to provide parents with a monthly newsletter highlighting all the activities that happened during the previous month. In this month's letter, we have also included a featured article from the American Montessori Society entitled "Creating Emotional Safety around Tantrums and Crying," by K.T. Korngold, MA.

We hope you enjoy seeing all the activities your child took part in. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. This newsletter is for parents, and we are open to suggestions including Article Selections. Join us in July to see more summer STEM activities that will be out of this world!

Sincerely,

Ms. Olivia Payne
Administrator of Communications and Marketing

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Small World Montessori
School of Miramar



@montessorischoolofmiramar



Small World Montessori TV

Important Dates

Monday, May 16th:

Parent Teacher Conferences

Wednesday, May 25th:

Spring Open House

Friday, June 3rd:

Last Day of School

Saturday, June 4th:

Primary Class Graduation

Monday, June 6th:

First Day of Summer

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FEATURED ARTICLE– “MONTESSORI DISCIPLINE AT HOME”

BY RACHEL PEACHEY

Parenting and discipline go together hand in hand. As parents, we must guide our children towards respectful behaviors and interactions with others. But boy is it tough! Creating a balance so that our children feel close to us, but also follow rules and respect boundaries is tricky. The Montessori philosophy offers a wonderful way to approach discipline in a loving way that meets both the children's and parent's needs.

This post is going to offer a basic explanation of Montessori discipline and examples of how you might use it. But, before we get to that, I want to take a moment to affirm ourselves as parents. Just about every parent that I know whether they are familiar with Montessori or not (myself included), struggles at times. Perhaps we have a philosophy and ideas for how we'd like to interact with our children and deal with discipline, but, man does life ever get in the way! Emotions, stress, overstimulation, extended family and more can make it seem impossible to stay on track. That doesn't mean you're failing! It doesn't mean you can't always try to improve either. What I'm getting at is that you should have confidence in yourself as a parent. Since the day you welcomed your child into your family, you became an expert in your child and your own parenting style.

That being said, let's take a look at how you might make use of a Montessori discipline approach in the home:

Prevention

"The child who concentrates is immensely happy." – Dr. Maria Montessori

The first step of Montessori discipline is avoiding the issues in the first place. Montessori noticed that children were happy when they were concentrating and had an opportunity to contribute to the classroom (or in this case, your home). That means that children need important work to do in the home that they're interested in and excited about. Whether it's practical life projects, an art center to enjoy, the ability to engage in a dance party or work in the garden, being busy is the antidote to poor behavior. [Permitting independence](#) is another essential part of the method.

The takeaway here?

You need to organize your home in such a way that your child has free access to interesting activities and tasks that they can engage in at will. In addition, remember that according to Montessori, children prefer REAL materials as opposed to toys. That means instead of offering a play tea-set, perhaps allowing your child to prepare and serve a real snack. Or, instead of giving your child play tool sets, teach them to use real tools (under supervision, of course).

If you're not sure what your child might enjoy, try noticing interests. You can expose your child to a variety of topics by reading books and notice which ones seem to intrigue your child the most. Then, base activities on these interests. In other words, [follow your child](#). Don't forget that interests don't have to be only academic. Fine and gross motor control are other skills children, especially the youngest, often focus on.

By providing a variety of activities and allowing choice, your child will be engaged in important work which avoids boredom, bad moods, and negative behaviors.

Modeling

Montessori was a strong believer in demonstrating behaviors and actions that children should repeat. Modeling is similar to preventing bad behaviors because kids repeat what you say and do. I couldn't count the times I hear my kids say something in the same way I do – it's been too many times!

So yes, kids are always watching what adults are doing, especially their parents. I don't say this to scare you, it's just something you should keep in mind. The more you can view yourself through your children's eyes, and act accordingly, the better.

Some examples of when you should be hyper-aware of this:

- When you're angry
- When you're sad
- When you're stressed

During these times, it's important to show our children good examples of how we can channel our emotions. One way I choose to do that is to be honest and just tell my kids how I'm feeling. "I'm so frustrated!" I'll say out loud. Sometimes I've also resorted to hitting a pillow. Now, Peanut sometimes notices my mood and asks "Are you angry?" or "Are you sad?" I answer as honestly as possible, and honestly, it often gains me cooperation. I say "I'm really worried about the time and I need your help," and he will often find a way to help carry something or help his sister with her shoes.

Eventually, this modeling will lead to kids showing some of the same behaviors. So, Peanut now occasionally tells us about his emotions or mood. It's one way for him to process it in a healthy way, although we also practice other ways to channel emotions. That will come up in one of the next sections.

Natural Consequences

When it comes to discipline, parents often feel the need to impose consequences and punishments on the child, rather than letting things run their course. However, this teaches your child to fear getting caught by a parent, teacher or authority figure rather than learning the natural consequences of their actions.

But, what are natural consequences?

In part, it's helping your child see what will happen as a result of their choices and actions, and letting it happen. Like what? For example, your child chooses to skip lunch. You allow them to skip lunch, but save their plate for later and when they ask for a snack, they can finish their lunch. Or your child leaves toys out and doesn't want to clean up. You can explain that leaving toys on the floor is dangerous for others because they might step on them and the family needs a clean place to live. Then, you can clean up the toys together, ensuring your child helps. Rather than feeling threatened with punishment, your child learns to see how their actions affect themselves and others.

An easy way to implement this technique is by narrating what you see and helping your child predict the future. This also works well with [aggressive behaviors like biting and hitting](#), and of course tantrums. You can say for example "I see you're angry. You want to hit me." However, in these cases, you may need to intervene to prevent children from getting hurt and say things like "I won't let you hurt your brother".

Montessori encouraged the use of control of error in materials and classroom activities. Natural consequences are the control of error of life. For example, Montessori encouraged the use of real glass dishes so that if children weren't careful or had an accident, the dishes would break. She believed this natural consequence was valuable for children to experience so that they could change their behavior in the future.

Montessori also encouraged teachers to talk with children about their behavior. To quote Dr. Montessori herself:

...if he shows a tendency to misbehave, she will check him with earnest words...

Many people misinterpret the Montessori method to be a permissive method that allows children unlimited freedom. In reality, the freedom is within limits that are carefully enforced through guidance by the teacher. Common consequences in a Montessori classroom include:

- Putting a material away that's not being used properly
- Cleaning up a mess or a spill
- Staying close to the teacher

You can use these same consequences in your home.

Staying Close

Traditional discipline techniques often include "time-outs", where the child is asked to sit away from the group. Rather than isolate the child, one commonly used discipline technique in the Montessori classroom is "gluing." A child who needs help following the rules is asked to stay close to the teacher and sit beside her while other children receive presentations. This helps the child refocus and then re-engage in the classroom appropriately.

How can you do this at home? It's not always easy, but when your child is acting out, by engaging with them in an activity they enjoy, or by inviting them to assist you in whatever you're doing, you can help them through the difficult moment. For example, you're making lunch and your child is pestering you and is whiny. Ask your child to help you with lunch and then promise to play, read books or do an activity together after eating. I find the [Hand in Hand](#) resources to be extremely helpful as they also encourage staying close. Their philosophy also matches up with the Montessori method perfectly.

If your child is experiencing a tantrum, you can also practice [staying close](#). Try letting your child know that you're close-by and are ready to comfort them when they're done crying, screaming or flailing. I've found this to be helpful with my kids because they don't always want to be comforted right away.

We also practice hitting pillows and stomping our feet to help channel anger in a positive way. Sometimes they use these strategies and sometimes they don't. It's a work in progress.

One Last Piece of Advice

When nothing else seems to work and you can't understand your child's behavior, I try to remember this quote of Montessori's:

Respect all the reasonable forms of activity in which the child engages and try to understand them.

Yes, sometimes our children can be confusing, frustrating and even overwhelming. But, if we're able to take a deep breath and try to understand what our children are saying to us, we can often see the reason for their behavior. Through compassion, patience, and careful listening, we can use a better kind of discipline. Montessori style discipline is a discipline that teaches and shows our children an example we'd like to see them live out with their friends.

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TAKE A LOOK INTO OUR SUMMER OF STEM AND SPACE!

