

A Vision of Learning from a Montessori Perspective

“Our aim is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his inner most core.”

MariaMontessori

Replicating what happens in our classrooms is not something we can achieve during this period. Our goal is to work in collaboration with families to keep alive the culture of learning that is unique to Montessori and provide families with support and activities that match the developmental needs and characteristics of the child.

The Montessori method is all about the process. While completion of work is important, it is our approach that makes all the difference. Learning is most effective when it is within a greater context. When we connect subjects and concepts, we establish meaning which fuels motivation in children. Above all, we want children to feel connected to their learning, not simply “complete assignments” while at home.

Learning together with a sense of **exploration, curiosity and discovery** results in deeper and more meaningful experiences for children. This instils a great sense of ownership and responsibility for the child.

It is important that parents remember that:

- Learning is not a spectator sport and to ensure active participation of the child.
- Learning is a social and not solo experience
- The human brain learns best through collaboration and creating rather than mere consumption of knowledge.
- Positive experiences are vital for learning. Therefore, information must be combined with positive emotion to ensure learning and formation of long term memory.
- Practice = progress and practice makes permanent

It is important to us that we maintain a feeling of connectedness throughout this process. We will be in regular contact in a variety of ways and continued communication between teachers and families throughout the period of closure is assured. Please do not hesitate to use our WhatsApp groups to ask questions.

The guidelines throughout these snippets will outline how the staff at all the KINNOVI Group schools will support our all families throughout this period of 'Learning from Home.'

THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

For our younger children (0 – 6 years), the learning environment is your home and surroundings. This means finding ways to support independence, engage in meaningful tasks and supplement learning through various activities suggested by teachers.

For our 6 to 12 aged children, this will mean all of the above, plus establishing a quiet space, expectations and routines for any specific assignments shared by teachers.

Where age-appropriate you might like to discuss 'Learning from Home 'with your child and include them in some decision-making processes:

- Ask them where to set up their space (if applicable)
- Make a schedule together that works for your family (when to take breaks / have time outdoors etc)
- Gather ideas for activities and projects
- Organize materials. For our older children, it will be important for them to maintain their routine of handing in work and receiving feedback from their teachers.

Overall, we can approach this as an opportunity to be creative and collaborative – we are here to support you through this process.

PRACTICAL LIFE

Practical life is an important part of experiential learning. It is part of every Montessori classroom and can be mirrored at home. These activities assist children in developing purposeful life skills for their continued growth and development. This includes refining fine motor and movement skills and practicing coordination, planning and problem-solving. Practical life activities:

- foster order and sequence;
- develop concentration;
- foster physical independence;
- foster the development of fine motor control; and
- provide opportunities for planning and carrying out tasks.

The Practical Life area also provides children with opportunities to contribute to family life. Inherent in these activities is the development of key executive functions: decision making, organization, problem-solving, impulse control, collaboration and communication. These skills form the foundation of a child's academic learning. For example, sequencing a task is a pre-reading skill.

Examples of practical life might include:

- setting the table;
- watering plants;
- tidying and organizing rooms;
- planning an outing;
- taking care of pets;

- preparing a snack/meal;
- helping with shopping lists/budgeting;
- repairing a bicycle; or
- planting a small garden.

Practical life is engaging for children at all stages of development and tasks are designed according to their level of coordination and independence. You can organize a “job chart” or list of family projects as a way to help guide your child’s interests. Planning and gathering resources to complete the tasks is purposeful work.

These ideas foster a sense of contribution, responsibility, shared experiences and satisfaction.

As our children get older, these activities lead naturally to volunteer experiences and beginnings of community work. For our oldest tweens, many of these practical life experiences are the foundation of their sense of belonging and personal vision.

THE UNINTERRUPTED WORK CYCLE

Establishing a routine that works for your family is an essential first step to creating a successful learning environment at home. Children are very familiar with this framework from school. In a Montessori classroom, children are given large blocks of time in order to explore their work deeply. This contributes directly to the development of concentration and provides opportunities to collaborate and problem-solve. It is the framework that fosters child-centered as opposed to teacher-directed learning.

OWNERSHIP OF TASKS AND SHARING OF LEARNING

Montessori learning environments are often referred to as “optimal learning environments” because of the inherent skills and outcomes that result from being in a

rich and interesting classroom, coupled with the dynamic of interactions amongst peers and teachers.

In order to foster a deep sense of ownership in their learning, we focus on two things: the developmental needs and characteristics of the child and their interests. Here are a few key points that aid in cultivating a child's self-direction and attention to their work:

- Choice
- Participation in planning and organizing tasks Conversation
- Finding good resources
- Sharing of knowledge

You will be receiving regular communications from your child's classroom teachers in the coming weeks. We encourage parents to follow the teachers' suggestions and guidance when completing work at home. The more children are involved in developing and detailing their activities, the more they can achieve.

One note regarding sharing or presenting work:

It is a regular occurrence in an Elementary (6 – 12) Montessori classroom for children to present their work or projects to one another. This is something you can replicate at home. Planning a presentation or sharing time at the end of a project is very exciting for young children and gives our older children an opportunity to use their voice. It is an essential part of the learning process as it requires synthesis of learning to describe, explain and express yourself clearly. It feels celebratory as well!

FEELING OF RESPONSIBILITY AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY/FAMILY

Being in a Montessori school is often described by children as being part of a big family. All of the aspects detailed above result in a feeling of belonging to a community and with that, we learn that there is a responsibility to ourselves, others and the environment.

It is our commitment to each child attending KINOVI Group schools that they reach their fullest potential and feel that they are a valued part of our community.