



**TODDLER PROGRAM** - Ages 18 months-3 years *“Help me do it myself...” - Maria Montessori*

The primary focus of a Montessori Toddler Program is to prepare an environment that supports the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of each child. Children have opportunities to work individually and cooperatively in a group setting. They learn to verbally express themselves as they explore self, community, and the world in which they live. This helps the children move consciously in the world. Toddlers spend the year becoming comfortable in their classroom community, gaining confidence in themselves, developing an awareness of others, and learning to feel secure in the relaxed atmosphere of our school setting.

Toddlers are in a developmental stage that Maria Montessori called the unconscious absorbent mind. Adults prepare the Toddler's environment with enriching aesthetics, materials, and furniture to foster independence and nurture curiosity. Toddlers begin to cultivate an interest in learning and a desire for exploration. They learn concentration, coordination, order, independence, language skills, responsibility, and respect. All of these prepare them well for a successful transition into the work of the Primary Program.

*“The education of a very small child does not aim at preparing him for school but for life.” - Maria Montessori*

Teachers use anecdotal observations to monitor student progress. Based on these observations, decisions regarding materials and curriculum are made. We make very individualized educational decisions at the Toddler level, based on age and ability.

Specific goals for the Toddler Program are as follows:

1. To assist the child in a positive separation from parents to facilitate individualization.
2. To provide an orderly environment in which Toddlers may explore and experience concepts and skills through manipulation and the use of all of their senses.
3. To provide a language-rich environment through precise vocabulary, music, materials, and activities.
4. To give the child opportunities for practical life experiences, care of the self and environment, so that the child understands that each person has an important function, which encourages a positive self-concept and confidence.
5. To provide a social environment for the fostering of community and respect.
6. To create an aesthetically pleasing environment through artwork and objects from nature that calls to the child's love of beauty.
7. To provide a supportive community for parents through education and participation in the school-wide community.



**TODDLER CURRICULUM**

Content Strand	Knowledge, Skills and Understanding	Material/Activity
<b>DEVELOPMENT OF MOVEMENT</b>		
<i>Typically children will:</i>		
<b>Control and coordination of body movement</b>	Learn to control and coordinate movement of body:  - Walk - Sit on a chair	Resources include: - push cart - pull cart - stairs - weaning chair - low slatted chair.
	Develop and consolidate skills including:  - Running - Jumping - Climbing	Resources include: - ramps - climbing frames - ladders - beams - balls - wagons - wheelbarrows - pulley lifters and weighted bags - Implements for sweeping, mopping, raking and gardening.
<b>Development of the hand grasp</b>	Explore and develop the capacities of the hand leading to development of the hand grasp and fine motor control	Resources include: - ball and tray or drawer - rings on a spindle - box with bins - cube in box - containers to open and close - peg box - balls - preparing food - sand play - cutting with scissors
<b>Eye-hand coordination</b>	Develop control of the hand (from batting to a mature pincer grip)	Resources are psycho-sensory-motor materials, including:



	<p>Coordinate eye and hand movements</p> <p>Cross the midline while working Use two hands together</p> <p>Transfer objects from hand to hand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- punch ball</li> <li>- box with knitted ball</li> <li>- box with other balls</li> <li>- ring on rocking base</li> <li>- ring on stable base</li> <li>- rings on a peg</li> <li>- rings on a spindle</li> <li>- graded rings</li> <li>- nuts and bolts</li> <li>- furniture with drawers, locks and keys</li> <li>- peg box</li> <li>- cubes and discs on vertical and horizontal dowels</li> <li>- egg in a cup</li> <li>- cube in a box</li> <li>- beads for stringing</li> <li>- box with different shapes for mailing (posting)</li> <li>- slotted box and chips</li> <li>- puzzles</li> <li>- range of fastenings</li> <li>- objects for opening and closing</li> <li>- sewing</li> <li>- materials and implements for cutting and gluing.</li> </ul>
<b>Eye-hand coordination</b>	Develop concept of object permanence	<p>Resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- box with ball and tray</li> <li>- box with ball and drawer</li> </ul>
	Sort objects	Resources include collections of three-dimensional objects for sorting.
<b>LANGUAGE</b>		
<b>Oral language acquisition and development</b>	<p>Communicate verbally and non-verbally</p> <p>Use spoken language to make meaning, with support if needed</p> <p>Link words and meanings</p>	<p>Language-enrichment activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- being listened to attentively</li> <li>- varied, real, everyday activities that involve incidental language use</li> <li>- adults speaking directly to children, modeling language use children can understand and</li> </ul>



	<p>Increase and extend vocabulary</p> <p>Extend language use from words to word groups, phrases and simple sentences</p> <p>Explode into language around 2 years of age</p> <p>Communicate confidently</p>	<p>imitate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- listening to and telling stories</li> <li>- questioning exercise</li> <li>- opportunities to speak and hold conversations with others</li> <li>- naming objects; naming pictures of objects; identical and similar matching of objects to cards including naming</li> <li>- fishing bags: general, classified and paired objects</li> <li>- songs, rhymes, games, finger plays, stories, poems</li> <li>- access to and being read to from quality children's books.</li> </ul> <p>Resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an enriched language environment</li> <li>- good models of language use that children can understand and imitate if they wish.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Oral language acquisition and development</b></p>	<p>Begin to use language appropriately in different situations to guide their own and others' behavior</p>	<p>All activities in the environment offer and encourage vocabulary enrichment and language experience.</p> <p>Specific activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- seeking assistance</li> <li>- waiting</li> <li>- taking turns</li> <li>- helping another child or an adult</li> <li>- preparing food</li> <li>- making a contribution to the prepared environment.</li> </ul> <p>Resources include good models of language use and social interaction that children can understand and imitate if they wish.</p>
<p><b>Preparation of the hand for writing</b></p>	<p>Develop a pincer grip and good hand control</p>	<p>Activities include all practical life and fine motor movement activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- puzzles</li> <li>- hand/eye coordination activities</li> </ul>



		- food preparation.  Resources include functional objects and implements matched to the children's size, strength and dexterity.
<b>Preparation of the hand for writing</b>	Learn how to hold and use a pencil, paint brush and needle	Activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- scribbling</li> <li>- gluing</li> <li>- painting</li> <li>- sewing</li> </ul> Resources include functional implements matched to the children's size, strength and dexterity.
<b>DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION OF THE SENSES</b>		
<b>Sensorial exploration</b>	Discriminate objects using the senses	Activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- practical life</li> <li>- food preparation.</li> </ul> Resources include psycho-sensorimotor materials.
	Gain impressions of color, shape/form, weight, length, dimension, texture, taste, sound	Resources include psycho-sensorimotor materials.
	Develop a sense of aesthetics	The environment and all materials are beautifully designed and arranged with just enough carefully chosen objects to create just the right amount of stimulus.
	Begin to classify objects	Activities in which children are given the names for general categories of items in their environment  Resources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- nomenclature objects</li> <li>- nomenclature cards and objects</li> <li>- nomenclature cards.</li> </ul>
<b>Visual discrimination</b>	Discriminate objects by sight	Activities include:  -observing and grasping varied objects



		matching.
<b>Tactile discrimination</b>	<p>Refine the sense of touch</p> <p>Discriminate objects by the sense of touch</p>	<p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sorting</li> <li>- fishing bags</li> <li>- food preparation.</li> </ul> <p>Resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- objects for tactile stimulation</li> <li>- objects for tactile discrimination.</li> </ul>
<b>Auditory discrimination</b>	<p>Listen to the sounds of objects</p> <p>Identify objects by sound</p>	<p>Resources are objects for auditory discrimination, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shakers</li> <li>- Sound tubes</li> <li>- musical instruments</li> </ul>
	<p>Experience timbre, rhythm and beat</p>	<p>Activities involving music and movement, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- singing</li> <li>- using percussion instruments</li> </ul>
<b>Olfactory and gustatory</b>	<p>Experience and identify different foods by smell, taste and sight</p>	<p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- food preparation</li> <li>- work with nomenclature objects.</li> </ul>
<b>Stereognostic sense</b>	<p>Gain knowledge of an object by feeling around it</p>	<p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- general fishing bag</li> <li>- classified fishing bag</li> <li>- paired objects fishing bag.</li> </ul>
<b>FUNDAMENTAL LIFE SKILLS IN THE INFANT COMMUNITY</b>		
<b>Transition (from home to Montessori early childhood settings)</b>	<p>Become familiar with an environment outside the home</p>	<p>Activity within the setting, which is familiar, home-like and a culturally appropriate environment</p>
	<p>Shake hands and greet another</p>	<p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- observing good models of adults greeting and shaking hands</li> <li>- opportunities to interact with</li> </ul>



		<b>others,</b>
	Remove shoes	Resources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a place for shoe removal and storage</li> <li>- a low bench to sit on.</li> </ul>
	Store bag and clothes	Resources include hooks or a cubby for clothing and bag.
	Pour a drink Choose and prepare food for themselves	Resources include pre-measured portions located within reach.
<b>Independence/Self-Confidence</b>	Choose an activity  Set up a mat or table as a workspace  Wait and take turns	Activities are organized within reach on low shelves. Adults model behaviors.  Resources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- child-sized tables and chairs</li> <li>- work mats.</li> </ul>
	Develop a sense of belonging, being and becoming  Imitate the social norms of society	Resources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A multi-aged group of children within same developmental phase</li> <li>- A supportive adult to observe, model and with whom to interact.</li> </ul>
	Develop more precise control of voluntary movement and hand/eye coordination	Activities for learning how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- carry furniture and equipment, e.g. chair, tray, mat, buckets, jugs</li> <li>- pull out and push in a chair</li> <li>- roll and unroll a mat - prepare drinks and food.</li> </ul> Resources include functional objects and implements matched to the children's size, strength and dexterity
<b>Care of person</b>	<i>Children develop and consolidate independence in:</i>	
	Drinking	Resources are a water source and glass within reach



	<p>Food preparation and eating</p> <p>Toileting</p>	<p>Food preparation activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cutting</li> <li>- grating</li> <li>- juicing</li> <li>- mixing</li> <li>- shelling</li> <li>- kneading</li> <li>- peeling</li> <li>- Modeling by adult and more expert children.</li> </ul> <p>Resources include utensils matched to children’s size, strength and dexterity.</p> <p>Resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- accessible toilet matched to children’s size and level of independence</li> <li>- adult support.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Care of person</b></p>	<p>Dressing and undressing</p>	<p>Activities that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- washing hands</li> <li>- cleaning teeth</li> <li>- blowing nose</li> <li>- brushing hair</li> <li>- cleaning shoes</li> <li>- role-modeling by adults and more expert children.</li> </ul> <p>Resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- storage hooks/cubbies and furniture matched to children’s size and strength</li> <li>- grooming area with mirror matched to children’s size</li> <li>- dressing frames for learning how to use buttons, zips and Velcro</li> <li>- implements matched to children’s size, strength and dexterity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Care of the environment (indoor and outdoor)</b></p>	<p><i>Typically children will be able to:</i></p>	



	Clean and care for the indoor environment	<p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- dusting</li> <li>- cleaning mirrors and windows</li> <li>- polishing wood</li> <li>- washing cloths</li> <li>- washing and drying dishes</li> <li>- sweeping</li> <li>- scrubbing tables</li> <li>- role-modeling by adults and more expert children.</li> </ul> <p>Resources include implements matched to children's size, strength and dexterity.</p>
	Clean up spills	<p>Activities include wiping, mopping and sweeping using implements matched to children's size, strength and dexterity.</p>
<b>Care of the environment (indoor and outdoor)</b>	Care for plants and garden  Observe and appreciate nature	<p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- dusting and wiping leaves</li> <li>- arranging flowers</li> <li>- planting and watering plants</li> <li>- growing seeds</li> <li>- raking and sweeping.</li> </ul> <p>Resources include implements matched to children's size, strength and dexterity</p>
	Care for animals	<p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- learning appropriate behavior around animals</li> <li>- feeding animals</li> <li>- caring for animals' habitat.</li> </ul>
	Develop a connection with reality and purposeful work	All <i>practical life</i> activities
	Develop a responsibility for the environment	All <i>practical life</i> activities
<b>Social relations</b>	Acquire appropriate language	<p>Resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modeling by adults and other children</li> <li>- supportive adults and other children to observe, imitate and with whom to interact.</li> </ul>



	Experience interactions with others	The resources are adults and other children in the environment.
	Begin to acquire culturally appropriate customs and manners	Adults model behaviors at point of need.
	Develop awareness of self and others  Experience taking turns	Children are respected as individuals and are free to choose and complete their own work. The environment is prepared so children have space for their own work. The number of each set of materials is limited, generally only one of each set. In this way children learn to value each activity and to take turns.

**MATHEMATICS**

One of the human tendencies is to measure the world and to calculate quantities. Infants are born with this tendency, which is called the ‘mathematical mind’ by Montessori educators. From birth, infants observe and respond to measurable physical relationships in their environment in order to be able to orient themselves to the environment and to make sense of it. They assess, measure, hypothesize, order and classify as they explore their environment with their senses and learn to operate in their environment. To crawl or walk from A to B involves assessment and calculation. Up to three years of age this is done unconsciously and by using the senses.

Many of the activities in Montessori settings prepared for infants and toddlers provide sensory experience of mathematical relationships. Some examples are:

- The Montessori materials provide experiences with dimension and form, sequencing, patterns, order and comparison. They also encourage reasoning and calculation.
- The Montessori environment and program provides experiences in shape and space, time and predictability and enhances working memory.
- Food preparation activities provide experience with measuring, quantity, weight, volume, sequencing and fractions.
- Puzzles, exact matching of nomenclature objects and cards, table setting, and flower arranging provide one-to-one correspondence.
- Language materials provide classification experiences.
- Washing hands, dishes and cloths provides experience with volume, weight and sequencing.
- Sand play provides experience with quantity, volume, weight, measurement and area. ● Songs, poems and finger plays provide experience with number.
- Counting books provide number experience ● Mathematical language pervades the environment – ‘more/less’, ‘right/left’, ‘up/down’, ‘high/low’, ‘in/out’, ‘big/little’, ‘large/small’, ‘heavy/light’, ‘some’, ‘full/empty’, ‘same/different’, ‘near/far’, ‘under/over’, ‘open/close’, ‘here/there’, ‘fast/slow’, ‘today/yesterday’, etc.



These experiences in the Toddler Community provide indirect preparation for the introduction of more formal concrete mathematical materials in the Montessori preschool setting, the Children’s House.

**SCIENCE, GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

Children from birth are interested in the world around them. They observe the natural world and absorb the culture of the society into which they are born. Children are fascinated by the way the world works, by the life of plants and animals, by the features of the places they find themselves in and by the customs and stories of the people around them.

In later educational contexts these interests are taken up formally in the study of science, geography and history. In the Montessori Early Years Learning Program they are integrated across the curriculum. Often children pursue their interest in science, geography or history as an extension of the exercises of the senses, because it is through the senses that children first perceive, observe and explore phenomena related to these fields of study.

In the Toddler, children experience nature informally through sensory experiences inside and outside the classroom. Many experiences happen spontaneously in the garden, for example:

- planting seeds
- watering plants
- cleaning leaves
- raking leaves
- arranging flowers
- observing animals

**CREATIVE ARTS**

**Music**

Music, in the Montessori view, is like language; it is an aspect of human expression that is integrated into daily life. From birth children delight in and respond to music. Often this delight is expressed through movement. The exercises of practical life build foundation skills in whole body and fine motor control of movement and hand-eye coordination children can use to participate more effectively in musical activities and exercises.

In Toddler Communities music and movement are integrated in activities that include:

- listening activities in which children move to music
- playing simple percussion instruments
- sense exercises in auditory discrimination
- games involving singing and movement.

<p><b>Music:</b> <i>auditory discrimination</i></p>	<p>Listen to the sounds of objects</p> <p>Identify objects by sound</p> <p>Experience timbre, rhythm and beat</p>	<p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- singing</li> <li>- identifying different voices.</li> </ul> <p>Resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- percussion instruments</li> </ul>
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		- sounds in the environment.
<b>Music:</b> <i>timbre</i>	Listen to and play simple instruments	Resources include a range of percussion instruments.
<b>Music:</b> <i>self expression</i>	Develop the skills to express themselves	Activities involving self-expression in music, movement and drama, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- singing</li><li>- movement and dancing</li><li>- playing percussion instruments</li><li>- movement games</li><li>- finger plays.</li></ul>

### **Movement and Dance**

The development and refinement of movement is an integral part of the child's development from birth to six years of age. The ability to appreciate dance and to be able to move one's body as a form of expression is an important facet of children's development. The focus on specific movements can assist children's development in many other areas, for example whole body coordination. Dance is also an important aspect of health and physical exercise. Young children have a natural sense of rhythm and often lack inhibition so dance comes naturally and spontaneously to them.

In Toddler Communities movement is one of the most critical components of the environment. Dance is experienced through movement and music activities.

### **Visual Arts**

Artistic expression was considered by Dr. Montessori to be one of the fundamental needs of humans. In particular, she encouraged children to draw. She felt that if children have fine motor control of the hand, learned through the exercises of practical life, combined with trained skills in perception, learned through the exercises of the senses, they would be able to create visual art works of a high quality.

In Toddler Communities art activities include sewing, cutting, painting, gluing, drawing, working with clay and flower arranging.

### **Spanish**

Research shows that acquisition of a second language occurs quicker and with greater depth of understanding when introduced at an age when children are learning their native language. Rochester Montessori School is proud to introduce the Spanish language beginning in our Toddler environment.



# Rochester Montessori School

A Montessori and International Baccalaureate School  
how children learn influences who they become



## Family Support

Early childhood settings are often the first point of contact for families needing additional support. Montessori early childhood settings aim to be a welcoming community center, a place of learning, and a safe place for children. The Montessori approach recognizes that children come from widely-varied family settings, and that culture, home life and family situation all affect learning and development. Family support may include consultations in the home or at the center, referrals to other services, support in crisis situations, and informal information and advice.