



Montessori At Home Activity Booklet

Easy Ways to Introduce
Montessori to Your Infant

**For Infants
2 months to 17 months**

“The child has a different relation to his environment from ours... the child absorbs it. The things he sees are not just remembered; they form part of his soul. He incarnates in himself all in the world about him that his eyes see and his ears hear.”

**Dr. Maria Montessori,
The Absorbent Mind**

Hello from HoTH

Dear Parent,

A warm welcome from all of us at House on the Hill! We are a family-run, genuine Montessori school, committed to pursuing excellence in early childhood education.

We pride ourselves as a leading Montessori pre-school where each child's creativity and talents are nurtured in a socially aware, stimulating and warm environment. But Montessori practice shouldn't end when school ends – starting and continuing the Montessori approach at home is of great benefit to your child.

There are many benefits to the Montessori style of teaching. Every child is born unique and full of potential. Montessori practice gives them the gift of independence through structured freedom and by allowing to learn at their own pace. This in turn enables the child to learn and grow, unimpeded, encouraging discovery and development.

We love sharing tips with our parents about how to bring Montessori into their homes. We have collected a selection of Montessori at Home activities that you can use to help your child to develop better, instilling a habit of responsible freedom and social awareness that will stay with them for life.

Thank you for taking the time to read our little booklet. There is so much more that we would like to share. If you have found the tips here useful, please consider:

- ◆ [Signing up for our newsletter mailing list](#)
- ◆ Following us on Social Media
[Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#): @HouseontheHillSG

Warm regards,
The HoTH Team

How To Use This Booklet

All children, regardless of age, thrive in an environment where they are challenged. Having said that, it is important to strike a balance between challenging them and allowing them to develop at their own pace.

- ◆ **Use this booklet as a guide.** Trust your instincts about what is best for your child.
- ◆ **Take some time to plan and get organised.** This applies to setting the space up as well as before each activity.
- ◆ **Let the child take the lead.** Take this time to talk to your child and explore what is important to them at this moment. Perhaps they have an interest in cooking or making a film. What is interesting to them is what they will focus on, and truly want to learn. Observe them objectively and give them freedom to explore.
- ◆ **Slow down.** What's the rush? Plan activities for and with your child – and these activities don't have to happen once. You can do them over and over again, children learn different things in each step. Practice makes perfect! Slowing down might also include lessening your reliance on digital devices. Take time to find joy in real life.
- ◆ **Hands on learning in the home.** Children **like** responsibility. They enjoy being involved in preparing food, setting the table, tidying up and more. Consider the child through their eyes - the most mundane task for adults can be exciting for children, especially the younger ones. Surprisingly, one of the most favourite activities for little ones in our schools is washing their dishes after a meal! Don't be afraid to involve your children in daily life.

- ◆ **You are the Guide – and Not the Boss or the Servant.** Give help when it is needed – but as little as possible. Let them help themselves, it is all part of the learning process.
- ◆ **Be patient!** It is not about perfection. Learning is a journey – and mistakes are a part of it.
- ◆ **Don't praise.** This might seem counterintuitive but with time children find intrinsic joy in independent work. We avoid praising the child to prevent them from doing the activity only for our acknowledgment. In our Montessori practice we use encouragement, not praise, to build healthy self-esteem and habits in our children.

We are constantly updating our blog with information about Montessori practice and positive parenting. [Visit our blog here!](#)



HotH Montessori Prepared Environment

Creating the Ideal Space for learning in the home

If there is one Montessori term that you should know, it's the Absorbent Mind! The Absorbent Mind was Maria Montessori's most in-depth work on her educational theory, based on decades of scientific observation of children. This book helped start a revolution in education. Since then, there have been both cognitive and neurological studies that have confirmed what Maria Montessori knew decades ago.

At House on the Hill, all our classes are carefully and purposefully designed to help our children to develop well, based on Dr. Montessori's learnings.

Key Points that you should take from the Absorbent Mind are:

- ◆ The child gains knowledge from his environment – they learn from the physical space around them, and they will mirror the language and movement of adults and children
- ◆ Starts with impressions being absorbed unconsciously
- ◆ At its peak receptivity during the preschool years
- ◆ Children do not need direct teaching in order to learn
- ◆ What the child takes in during the absorbent mind period is taken in effortlessly and remains as the foundation of their personality

We believe that with the right conditions, the full potential of a child can be realised. In order to achieve this, we must create the ideal learning environment for them. It needs to be structured by careful preparation, to aid the child's life and natural growth.

How do you create this ideal learning environment at home?

If you think about what an ideal environment for you to work in is like, the same would apply for children. Peaceful, quiet surroundings enable concentration. A beautiful environment helps to motivate. A place that is orderly and tidy.

Here are our top tips for creating the ideal environment!

- ◆ **Follow your child** – Observe your child's interest and development
- ◆ **Invest in open shelves and baskets** – Create an organized and peaceful environment
- ◆ **Choose some of your child's nicest toys** – Do they inspire and nurture? Which one sparks your child's imagination?
- ◆ **Limit** quantity of toys available for the child to select
- ◆ **Natural Materials** – try to use materials that are beautiful and delicate to the touch
- ◆ A **home** for everything and everything in its place
- ◆ **Accessible space** – giving children the opportunity to be independent in their own space
- ◆ **Get support** – don't be afraid to ask for help! It could be from anyone at home who is actively participating in raising your child, other parents from the same school or from your child's class teacher



Age Group Expectations

Infant (2–17 months old)

Absorbing The World Around Them

Maria Montessori created a philosophy of education that begins at birth, when infants' minds are already busy absorbing their environment and learning about the world. Montessori for Infants is about how to talk and respond to our babies, how to set up a safe and stimulating environment for them, and how to nurture their natural curiosity and drive for independent exploration. We call our space for Infants the 'Nido', or 'nest' in Italian.

In Montessori terms, Nido is the environment for children from birth to 17 months old. Within the Nido there are two groups of children: those that are curious, but not yet mobile and those that are crawling, scooting, and exploring the world on their feet. Children in this age group are developing at an incredible rate and it is very important to create the right foundation for them.

More Than Just Care-taking

At this vulnerable age the child should not be overwhelmed with flashy objects and bright lights, but rather they should be appropriately stimulated with simple, elegant and natural materials that are appealing to them.

Do set-up the space you are working with your baby in to encourage movement. It's important for them to have lots of space to be able to wiggle, crawl, and walk. Their bodies are programmed to move: it is how they explore and learn! In our Montessori for Infant Nido, we encourage it however we can, with tunnels, pull-up bars, and a variety of textures on the floor to feel and discover.

Don't be afraid of a little mess – and be prepared for it! We use plastic sheets to protect the floors and furniture. Oh, and lots of rags for wiping up after!

Start as Early as Possible

We can't emphasise the importance of early language exposure to infant linguistic development. Always talk and sing with your little one! When they babble, respond! This helps them develop the natural pattern of language and conversation. We also encourage you to talk to your baby about what is happening to them. Dr. Montessori believed in the dignity of the child, so try to always be gentle and give verbal cues when an event is happening, such as diaper changing or bath time.

In this booklet, we have put together a collection of activities that should get you started on how to engage meaningfully with your baby. Each of these activities is engaging and fun for our babies, but they also have developmental intentions.

Some promote language development, support spatial awareness and gross motor development, help them understand emotions, strengthening grips and developing fine motor skills, learning to track movement and much more! This is just the tip of the iceberg, do continue to explore how else you can create situations for your baby to develop well in.

Most importantly, have fun! Try not to get stressed! At this stage it is difficult to see concrete results of your efforts, but trust us when we say that it will not go to waste!



Montessori at Home Activity

Mirror Time

Starting around 6 months, babies begin to recognize themselves in the mirror and can begin to learn more about what they can do. They are also beginning to put language and vocabulary together. A mirror is crucial to this process. Simply put: mirror time matters.

What You Need

- ◆ A mirror! Full-length preferably

What To Do

- ◆ Sit with your baby in front of the mirror
- ◆ Try these movements:
 1. Clap your hands
 2. Sing nursery songs with motion
 3. Make funny faces
 4. Play peek-a-boo
 5. Stick out your tongue



💡 Montessori Tips

- ◆ Mirror time can be done every day for at least 15 minutes and everyone in the family can join in.
- ◆ The more the merrier – the more baby has to look and check out in front of the mirror, the better!
- ◆ Mirror time helps develop vision tracking, fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, gross motor movement, attention span, sense of self and language and emotional skills.
- ◆ Older infants can learn new vocabulary (e.g. learning parts of the body).
- ◆ Plus, they love to dance in front of the mirror!

Montessori at Home Activity

Let's Make Strawberry Yogurt!

This sensorial cooking activity lets little ones 'cook' safely whilst feeling different textures with their hands and tasting different flavours with their tongues!

What You Need

- ◆ 1 bowl of plain yogurt
- ◆ 1 bowl of pre-cut sweet strawberries (according to your child's developmental readiness)
- ◆ Spoons
- ◆ Bowl

What To Do

- ◆ Prepare table mat
- ◆ Put bib on child, along with the things on the table
- ◆ Introduce the ingredients and let your child taste them individually
- ◆ Scoop 3-4 spoonful of yogurt into an empty bowl and have your child put the strawberries in
- ◆ Mix everything together
- ◆ Taste!



💡 Montessori Tips

- ◆ For infants under 12 months, this is a great exercise for sensorial development, developing their sense of taste and feeling different textures.
- ◆ For the over 12 month olds, try to include them as much as possible in the preparation of the recipe. This is great for motor skill development.
- ◆ The fruit can be mashed up or whole, depending on your child's developmental readiness.
- ◆ Other fruit suggestions – blueberries, passionfruit, mango or green kiwi! Watch out for sugar levels in the fruit, not too sweet is preferable.

Montessori at Home Activity

What's that Flavour?

In this activity, the children will explore their sense of taste by trying different foods. They also get to feel lots of different textures and learn new words!

What You Need

- ◆ 3 empty bowls
- ◆ 1 piece of salty pretzel
- ◆ 1 tablespoon apple juice
- ◆ 1 lemon wedge

What To Do

- ◆ Prepare table mat
- ◆ Put bib on child, along with the things on the table
- ◆ Introduce child to the foods as a whole
- ◆ Get them to taste it and encourage them to say the appropriate word - "salt/ salty" for the pretzel, "sweet" for the apple juice and "sour" for the lemon
- ◆ Taste and repeat!



💡 Montessori Tips

- ◆ The fine motor skill development aspect of this activity enhances the child's pincer & palmer grasp. There is a cognitive function as they learn to associate words through objects and actions and practice repeating familiar words.
- ◆ Encourage your child to express themselves through activities and movements for social development.

Montessori at Home Activity

Art in a Bag

Mess-free sensory art! Little ones can explore textures and colours without the mess!

What You Need

- ◆ A4 paper
- ◆ Paint
- ◆ Ziplock bag

What To Do

- ◆ Squirt some paint onto paper
- ◆ Insert into a ziplock bag
- ◆ Seal
- ◆ Let infant squish, smooch, rub, and throw bag around to their hearts delight
- ◆ Take the paper out and let dry
- ◆ You now have a piece of baby art to hang up!



Montessori Tips

- ◆ Be as animated as possible while doing this exercise to engage more with your baby.
- ◆ Some talking points:
 - Swirl the paint
 - Describe what you're doing
 - Talk about the colours you're using
 - What textures are you feeling?
- ◆ It may feel as though you're talking to yourself – but you're doing a world of good for your baby!

Montessori at Home Activity

Starry Night

Now you can make your own starry night masterpiece! Inspired by Dutch post-impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh, whose work was notable for its beauty, emotion, and colour, this activity is great for introducing colour and for working on sensorial development with.

What You Need

- ◆ Aluminium foil (A4 size)
- ◆ Edible paint: Blue, Black, White and Yellow (for stars)
- ◆ Cardboard (A4 size)
- ◆ Glue

What To Do

- ◆ Paste the aluminium foil to the cardboard
- ◆ Drop some blue, black, and white paint on the foil
- ◆ Get the child to smear the paint using their fingers to create dramatic effects on the night skies
- ◆ When the paint is dry, help the children to paint some stars on the dry out paint and voila! You've made yourself a Van Gogh-inspired Starry Night painting!



💡 Montessori Tips

- ◆ Be as animated as possible while doing this exercise to engage more with your baby.
- ◆ Some talking points:
 - Swirl the paint
 - Describe what you're doing
 - Talk about the colours you're using
 - What textures are you feeling?
- ◆ Painting can get messy, so plan for waterplay or bath time after this! Also, don't forget to put down newspapers or plastic sheeting to protect the surrounding area from flying paint.

Montessori at Home Activity

Several Circles

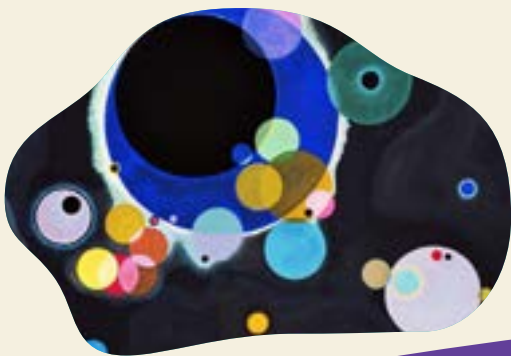
Let your baby's inner Wassily Kandinsky out! Inspired by the pioneer of abstract art, this activity using block printing to introduce the circle shapes and colours to little ones. They are also developing motor skills and hand-eye coordination when their hands stamp circles onto the paper, whilst working on pincer and palmer grip work.

What You Need

- ◆ A4 size white drawing paper
- ◆ Paints (various colours)
- ◆ Toilet rolls, bottle caps (anything that creates a round print)

What To Do

- ◆ Pour the paint individually into different containers
- ◆ Get your white drawing paper ready
- ◆ Have your child dip the toilet roll or the bottle cap into the paint and print it onto the white paper. Do the same method repeatedly by using different colours
- ◆ Let the paint out to dry
- ◆ Now you have an abstract painting inspired by Kandinsky. Frame it up!



Montessori Tips

- ◆ Focus on the PROCESS of making art, rather than the final product. This allows the child to experience the sensorial element of art without the expectation of creating something recognizable.
- ◆ Some words to keep emphasising during this exercise:
 - Big
 - Small
 - Circle
 - Colour
- ◆ Try to be as animated as possible. It will help the child to focus and engage better.

Montessori at Home Activity

Sensory Bottles

We love making our own sensory bottles. They're easy to make, fun, colourful – and so good for cognitive development!

What You Need

- ◆ Empty, clean plastic bottles (with the label removed)
- ◆ Superglue or clear tape
- ◆ Pour-ins e.g. rice, dry pasta, coloured sand, quinoa, beans, split peas, small toys, sand, feathers, beads

What To Do (for parents)

- ◆ Pour the pour-ins into the bottle
- ◆ Seal either with glue or tape

What To Do (for infants)

- ◆ Shake to use! Ask them if they can hear the different sounds?



Montessori Tips

- ◆ Sensory bottles are very good for children aged one to three years, who are in the sensitive period for small objects.
- ◆ During this period, children are fixated on small objects and tiny details, which prepare the child's mind for understanding how little things make up their world.
- ◆ Here we have a dry sensory bottle – but do try out liquid bottles for visual sensory work as well!

Montessori at Home Activity

Threading

This activity is great for curious little hands. Have fun whilst strengthening grips and developing fine motor skills!

What You Need

- ◆ Colander
- ◆ Container with cover
- ◆ Toilet rolls
- ◆ Separate baskets for:
 - Pipe cleaners
 - Sticks
 - Yarn
 - Straws

Presentation

- ◆ Place a mat on floor
- ◆ Place the item which you would want to start first and show them to your child
- ◆ Introduce to them how the activity is being done
- ◆ Invite your child to the activity

Activity 1

- ◆ Show child how to thread the pipe cleaners through the holes in the colander
- ◆ Complete the work cycle by removing all the pipe cleaners from the holes and place them back into the basket

Activity 2

- ◆ Poke a few holes through the plastic lid of the container. Make sure they're big enough for the sticks to go through
- ◆ Show child how to thread the sticks through the holes from the top of the container
- ◆ Complete the work cycle by opening the lid of the container and place the sticks back into the basket

Activity 3

- ◆ Cut the toilet rolls into smaller tubes
- ◆ Show child to thread the yarn through the toilet rolls
- ◆ Complete the work cycle by removing the thread and place them back into the basket



Montessori Tips

- ◆ These activities help to develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination for mobile infants (over 12 months old).
- ◆ Don't just leave them to play on their own though.
- ◆ Fill the time with plenty of eye-contact and talk to them! This helps them develop the natural pattern of language and conversation.

Key details about HoTH

Founded in 2012, House on the Hill is a family-run school. We are a house of curated learning, a genuine Montessori. We believe in immersing the child in an open and stimulating environment with a curriculum of experiential learning. This allows each child to develop life-long skills for their futures successes, at their own pace.

Here are 5 things you should know about us:

◆ **Genuine Montessori**

We stay true to the values and education excellence of the Montessori method. Our specially-trained Montessori educators help to ensure our curriculum instils strong language and mathematical skills, preparing each child for their next step in either local or international schools. House on the Hill is one of a few Montessori pre-schools with individualised curriculum, vertical – learning, and 3-hour work cycle classes.

◆ **Life is an Adventure**

To build critical thinking skills and creative independence, we create and weave in experiences that help with fostering a lifelong love of learning. Children at House on the Hill are imbued with a lasting sense of positivity to seize every moment of life.

◆ **Prepared Environment**

From large green spaces to the cozy, wood-filled classes, our spaces are warm, inviting and purposefully built to be safe, accessible and to subtly nurture sensorial and motor skill development.

◆ **Nutrition**

We are what we eat and this is doubly so for children. Our menu has been developed in collaboration with “The Food Doctor” Ian Marber, an internationally-renowned expert on diet and nutrition, using only the highest quality produce and no added salt or sugar to create well-balanced and nutritious meals for our growing children. This allows them to concentrate better and learn more actively.

◆ **Close Relationships with our Parents**

We believe in being a pillar of support for parents. Regular and specific feedback is provided often to optimise each child’s individualised curriculum. Our Parents-Teachers Association is highly engaged and parents are invited to participate in school activities on a regular basis. Bringing up your child is a team effort and everyone who joins us becomes part of the HotH family, both child and parents alike!

**To find out more about House on the Hill or
to book a visit, please click here
houseonthehill.com.sg/welcome**



LOCATIONS

Mount Sophia

33 Mount Sophia
Singapore 228481

Balmoral

2H Balmoral Crescent
Singapore 259887

Pasir Panjang

396 Pasir Panjang Road
#02-01, Singapore 118733

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 houseonthehill.com.sg

  @houseonthehillsg

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please check out our blog for more
Montessori at Home activities and
information about Montessori

houseonthehill.com.sg/news-events