



NORTH  
YARMOUTH  
ACADEMY

# North Yarmouth Academy Lower School Toddler and Primary Guide for Learning from Home

*This guide for learning from home was adapted from materials from Arbor Montessori School in Georgia and the Montessori School in Tokyo, Japan. In these unique and challenging times, we are grateful for the resources available from colleagues around the globe.*

## **LEARNING FROM A MONTESSORI PERSPECTIVE**

When embarking on a time of learning from home, our aim is to create a Montessori-based framework that serves our students while supporting parents as we all adapt to a different daily routine. It is important to us that the children's activity during this time be enjoyable, thoughtful, challenging, and rewarding. 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 each child.

### **How do we establish this at home?**

The Montessori method is all about the process. Learning together with a sense of exploration, curiosity, and discovery results in deeper and more meaningful experiences for children. This instills a great sense of ownership and responsibility for the child. It is important to us that we maintain a feeling of connectedness through this process. We will be in regular contact in a variety of ways and there will be daily communication between teachers and families throughout the period of closure.

## **THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT**

For our younger students, 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.

Where age-appropriate, you may wish to discuss learning from home with your child and include them in some decision-making processes:

- Ask them where they would like to set up their work 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.

This as an opportunity to be creative and collaborative, and 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 students 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;
- Promote the development of fine motor control;
- Provide opportunities for planning and carrying out tasks.

Practical Life activities provide 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;
- Planting a small garden (window, container, etc.).

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.

## **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 IN 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 daily communications from your child’s classroom teachers in the coming weeks. We encourage parents to follow teacher suggestions and guidance when completing work at home. The more children are involved in developing and detailing their activities, the more they can achieve.

## **RESPONSIBILITY AND CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY**

Being in a Montessori school is often described by students 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 at NYA that they reach their fullest potential and feel that they are a valued part of our community.

# TODDLERS

## SUGGESTED DAILY SCHEDULE FOR TODDLERS

Routine and consistency are very important for your toddler. We have provided the schedule below as one suggestion for how to organize your toddler's day. We recognize the limitation for families with multiple children and parents who are working both in and out of the home. Relax, be flexible, and do what works best for your child and your family.

<b>Early Morning</b>	Wake up and assist in making bed Use the bathroom, brush teeth Eat breakfast and help with clean-up
<b>Mid-Morning</b>	Watch daily teacher video Work Cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have a few choices of activities for children to choose from</li><li>• Rotate through activities one at a time for a 60-90 minutes total</li><li>• Include a mid-morning snack break: children can set the table, eat, and clean up</li><li>• Remember to make time for bathroom breaks</li><li>• Read stories, sing songs, listen to music, and singalong</li></ul>
<b>Late Morning</b>	Active Play Break: outside if possible or physical inside activities
<b>Lunch</b>	Eat lunch and help with clean-up Bathroom break
<b>Early Afternoon</b>	Nap Time Wake up and use the bathroom
<b>Afternoon</b>	Listen to music and look at books
<b>Late Afternoon</b>	Play Break: take a walk with family, engage in indoor or outdoor activities

## TODDLER PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Students may be expected to:

- Enjoy family life with developmentally appropriate contributions.

Parents are invited to:

- Establish daily routines and expectations.
- Support your child's growing independence in daily life activities.
- Help your child with the hardest part of a task (not the whole task).
- Initiate verbal communication frequently, ask question, share concerns and observations.
- Be consistent; follow routines and clear sequences for each activity.
- Limit screen time where possible.
- Include your child in household chores.

- Provide opportunities for outdoor activities (gross motor skill development).
- Monitor daily communication from your teachers.
- Initiate communication with teachers with questions, ideas, or concerns.
- Let go of perfection. This is a process and an adventure. Have fun!
- Enjoy and appreciate time with your child.

Toddler teachers will:

- Email each school day with a video of morning meeting including elements such as welcome song, calendar, weather, finger plays, a story, and closing song, and with a list of suggested activities for the day.
- Offer live Zoom sessions for the children to engage with the teacher and peers.
- Share guidance in setting up daily routines at home.
- Provide suggestions for screen time.
- Give general and individual suggestions for activities for fine and gross motor skills, providing pictures, videos, and suggested materials as appropriate.
- Provide suggestions for books and songs to support language acquisition.
- Offer suggestions for practical life activities at home such as recipes, food prep, house chores, clothing tips, etc.
- Provide daily “office hours” to be available to families for questions, individual support, and consultation regarding toilet learning, eating and sleeping habits, and activities. Communication may happen via email, phone, or Zoom video chat.

## **TODDLER PREPARED ENVIRONMENT**

“A place for everything and everything in its place” is one of the critical principles of Montessori at home. Having a place for everything, on a child-friendly scale, means that children know where to find what they need, and have a place to put things when they’re done. This is an essential tool in teaching them to be responsible for their belongings. External order gives the children internal order and security. An ordered environment also has fewer distractions, allowing children to focus on the task at hand.

Have a place in each room for your child’s carefully chosen belongings. Think out the activities and materials for all living spaces and arrange the environment to include your child’s activities.

Possibilities include:

- Having a stool to sit on and a place to hang coats and keep shoes by the front door.
- Creating a neat and organized place for your child’s books and toys in the living/family/play room.
- Storing clothing in low drawers or baskets, as well as moving the rod in the closet down to eye-level so your child can reach their clothing.
- Placing step stools in both the kitchen and bathroom to enable them to wash their hands and, in the case of the kitchen, help with meal preparation and rinsing dishes.
- Placing toys, games, and art supplies on low shelves where your child can easily access them.
- Separating toys into various baskets, bins, or shelves, so the items stay separate and are easy to find without needing to sift through piles of other toys.
- Storing healthy snacks down low in your refrigerator or pantry so your child can help themselves.

- Keeping beverages in small pitchers located on the lower shelf in the fridge, with child-friendly cups nearby. When your child is thirsty, allow them to help themselves — just be sure to keep a sponge/rags nearby, so they can clean up any messes they make.
- Being careful to not put out too many toys and books at one time. Those being used by your child at the moment are sufficient. Rotating is a good idea – taking out those books and toys that have not been chosen lately and removing them to storage for a time. Children grow and change and they need help to keep their environment uncluttered and peaceful.

## **ACTIVITIES FOR TODDLERS AT HOME**

### **Practical Life**

- Food Preparation
  - Preparing their own snack: cutting half of an apple (cut horizontally) using an apple slicer, squeezing orange juice, spreading cream cheese or jam on half of a bagel or bread.
  - Slicing vegetables and fruit for snack and dinner.
  - Baking: have ingredients pre-measured and in jars.
- Care of Self
  - Dressing and Undressing: give your child enough time to practice dressing and undressing by themselves. Only step in when needed and be okay with mis-matched outfits and less than perfect as long as your child is comfortable and happy!
  - Brushing hair and teeth (with help as needed).
  - Toileting: It's important to continue with the toilet learning process. Your child's teachers are happy to provide suggestions and guidance.
- Care of Environment
  - Mopping, sweeping, or use of a dustpan and dust brush.
  - Helping with laundry.
  - Watering plants and leaf washing.
  - Window washing, dusting, and wood polishing of large furniture in the home.
  - Taking care of pets.
  - Loading and unloading dishwasher, dishwashing by hand.

### **Art Work**

- Coloring: with crayons, with markers, on whiteboards, on chalkboards.
- Painting: finger-painting, painting on paper, using "painting books" (like coloring books)
- Collage: use cut up magazines, old photos, construction paper, yarn, stickers, glue sticks, etc.
- Playdough: homemade or purchased; add cookie cutters, plastic knives, etc.
- Clay or kinetic sand: build and create using hands and imagination.
- Sidewalk chalk: get creative outside!
- Look online and see teacher emails for more suggestions on projects at home.

### **Outdoor Activities**

It is always fun for children to spend time with their parents in nature. In these times, it is more important than ever to take a break and enjoy being outside. Take some time out of your busy schedule to explore outdoors with your child. You may enjoy the experience as much as your children will!

Here are a few ideas for connecting your child with nature:

- If you have 15 minutes:
  - Watch the clouds and see what animals you can make out of them.
  - Hug some trees and try to find one that your arms fit perfectly around.
  - Turn over a rock and see what is hiding underneath.
- If you have 30 minutes:
  - Do a backyard/nature treasure hunt.
  - Try your hand at rock stacking.
  - Grab some leaves or pieces of bark and race them down a creek.
- If you have an hour:
  - Go for a walk and make note of all the sounds you hear.
  - Find a nature trail and help children make up a game or collect bugs or leaves.
  - Pack some food and have a picnic.

## Language

- Name things in both indoor and outdoor environments.
- Read together: let your child choose the books, talk about how the characters might be feeling and wonder together what will happen next. Reading with your child teaches more than literacy and language skills. Your child is learning that you value his interests and choices, and that you love him and enjoy being close to him. Studies show that lifelong readers are those who, as children, simply found reading a pleasurable experience.
- Sing songs and do finger-plays. Use our videos as a guide.
- Narrate what you do as you go through your daily routines. This helps your child connect words with objects and actions. "I'm washing the dishes. I'm squeezing the yellow dish soap into the warm water."

# PRIMARY

## SUGGESTED DAILY SCHEDULE FOR PRIMARY

Routine and consistency remain very important for the young child. We have provided the schedule below as one suggestion for how to organize your child's day. We recognize the limitation for families with multiple children and parents who are working both in and out of the home. Relax, be flexible, and do what works best for your child and your family.

<b>Early Morning</b>	Set up, eat, and clean up breakfast; help with dishes Basic chores: collect dirty clothes, sort laundry, help load washing machine; dusting; tidying bedroom and playroom Prepare morning snack (place in accessible area to be eaten later), clean up
<b>Mid-Morning</b>	Watch daily teacher video Uninterrupted Work Cycle: Children should engage in activities to practice skills for practical life, sensorial work, language, or math
<b>Late Morning</b>	Active Play Break: outside if possible or physical inside activities
<b>Lunch</b>	Set up, eat, and clean up lunch; help with dishes
<b>Early Afternoon</b>	Quiet Time: may include rest or nap, reading books, handwork/art activities, reflective time
<b>Afternoon</b>	Afternoon Work Time: Continuation of morning work cycle activities, plus time for care of the environment and preparation for the next day's work
<b>Late Afternoon</b>	Play Break: take a walk with family, engage in indoor or outdoor activities

Preparations for the next day and chores can be performed throughout the day. Activities can be modified according to child's readiness and developmental needs.

## PRIMARY PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Students may be expected to:

- Enjoy family life with developmentally appropriate contributions.

Parents are invited to:

- Support your child's independence in daily life activities.
- Establish daily routines and expectations.
- Be mindful of and allow children to continue periods of concentration.
- Limit screen time where possible.
- Provide opportunities for daily physical activity.
- Monitor daily communication from your teachers.

- Initiate communication with teachers with questions, ideas, or concerns.
- Remain mindful about your child’s stress or worries during this time of change.
- Let go of perfection. This is a process and an adventure. Have fun!
- Enjoy and appreciate time with your child.

Primary teachers will:

- Email each school day with a video of morning meeting, reading, and other activities, and with a list of suggested activities for the day.
- Offer live Zoom sessions for the children to engage with the teacher and peers.
- Give guidance in setting up a daily routine.
- Make suggestions for appropriate house chores.
- Offer guidelines and suggestions for screen time.
- Share both general and individual suggestions for activities developing fine motor skills, gross motor skills, language, and math.
- Initiate individual communications based on student needs.
- Provide daily “office hours” to be available to families for questions, individual support, and consultation. Communication may happen via email, phone, or Zoom video chat.

## **PROGRAM-SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

Children aged 3 to 6 thrive in environments that promote repetition, routine, and the mastery of purposeful movement. Allow your child to choose activities and give the opportunity for periods of time without distractions. The key to a successful learning environment is order, access to tactile resources, space to explore, and meaningful activity. For the Primary child, work and play should be interchangeable—a natural, fun, and exciting part of life!

## **ACTIVITIES FOR PRIMARY AT HOME**

### **Practical Life**

- Ages 3 to 4:
  - Meal or Snack Preparation: slicing vegetables, fruit, cheese, etc.
  - Baking: measuring and mixing ingredients.
  - Kitchen Care: loading and unloading the dishwasher, washing dishes by hand, sweeping floors.
  - Pet Care: walking, playing with, and grooming.
  - Dusting: the leaves of plants with a soft cloth or furniture around the house.
  - Nature walks in the yard or about the neighborhood with a list of things to find.
  - Walking on the Line: make a masking tape line throughout the house and walk carefully on the line.
  - Art: coloring, painting, collage, sidewalk chalk.
  - Cutting and gluing – e.g. find and cut all of the plants in a magazine and glue into a collage.
  - Sewing shapes/pictures onto napkins, hand/kitchen towels, etc.

- Ages 5 to 6 — Any of the above plus:
  - Cutting (advance searches: mammals, birds, amphibians, etc.)
  - Baking: reading, measuring and mixing simple recipes.
  - Handwork: crocheting, finger knitting, or sewing words, initials, or pictures on napkins, hand towels, etc.
  - Origami

## Sensorial

- Ages 3 to 4:
  - Explore the home for 2 dimensional shapes (rectangles, squares, circles, etc.).
  - Explore the home for 3 dimensional shapes (spheres, cylinders, cones, cubes, prisms).
  - Explore the home for textures that are rough or smooth.
  - Explore sound by tapping on different objects (pot, glass, wooden cutting board, etc.) with different objects as well (tap with a metal spoon, then a wooden spoon).
- Ages 5 to 6 — Any of the above plus:
  - Explore spices and attempt to recognize them by scent.
  - Compare the various shapes of leaves found amongst the house plants.
  - Draw a picture that includes certain shapes i,e, 1 circle and 3 rectangles, or 1 square and 4 triangles).

## Language

- Ages 3 to 4:
  - Sound Games/I-spy: Something that begins with the sound /s/.
  - Question Game: Have a conversation using who/what/when/where/why questions.
  - Sing new songs (try singing in different languages!).
  - Trace shapes, letters in flour (pour flour on a cookie sheet).
- Ages 5 to 6 — Any of the above plus:
  - Write a letter to a friend or family member to mail.
  - Assist in writing list of things to do for a day or a week.
  - Write a story or a play and read aloud or act out when finished.

## Mathematics

- Ages 3 to 4:
  - Scavenger hunt/counting objects collected.
  - Counting objects (beans, pennies, etc.).
  - Sorting laundry.
  - Sorting silverware.
- Ages 5 to 6 — Any of the above plus:
  - Hopscotch math—all operations can be done, just make your hopscotch go higher than 10.
  - Math facts with dice.