

The Montessori Approach to Discipline

Imagine your child/children twenty years from now. List the social and emotional characteristics that you would like to see.

The Montessori discipline philosophy fosters these positive qualities by focusing on these essential elements:

- Mutual Respect

- The adults speak in a calm tone of voice
- Words are not shaming or threatening
- Opportunities are given to express and validate feelings

*Adults speak with children privately to minimize attention and allow other children to continue working, playing, etc (downplay distraction)

- Logical Consequences

- Expectations are positively and clearly stated and upheld
- Bribes, rewards, punishments, and repeated warnings are not used
- Explanations are given for "why" a behavior is unacceptable
- Consequences are consistently followed through

*"If you play during work time then you will work during play time" and informing a child that he or she needs to go back and walk when he or she was previously running in the hall are both logical consequences.

- Active Discipline

- Children learn from their mistakes and help each other (spills)
- Children develop skills needed to solve problems and resolve disputes and conflicts (peace rose)
- Children help create and reinforce rules (collaborative agreements)

*Children are not passive and don't go to adults to automatically "fix" the situation. They feel empowered to "help" the situation.

- Inner-Discipline

- Children take responsibility & are held accountable for their actions
- Children develop intrinsic motivation and self-esteem
- Children learn self-control
- Children feel competent and independent

*Children are expected to make good choices wherever they are.

In Montessori Classrooms there are:

- Collaborative Agreements
- Community Meetings
- Peace Rose/ Peace Table (if space allows)
- Helpful strategies to solve conflicts
- Non-negotiable/Teacher Rules

*Teachers, Assistants, and other students (often older) help children find words to express and understand their feelings and think of better choices.

12 Things You Can Do At Home:

1. Model appropriate behavior (tone, body language, words). Be calm.
2. Make clear expectations and explain why they are important to you child.
3. Communicate expectations with other family members and sitters.
4. Set logical consequences and be sure to consistently follow through with them.
5. Encourage intrinsic motivation and self-discipline
 - Try not to bribe/reward with food, objects or money
 - Ask yourself "would my child do what I ask without promising ___"
 - Refer to the handout labeled praise vs. encouragement for phrases
6. Designate appropriate household chores (allowances could be used)
7. Establish routines (ex. free time - dinner - reading - bedtime)
8. Allow your child to take responsibility for belongings and his or her room
9. Help your child understand *why* a behavior is inappropriate; this involves a lot more talking rather than just a quick reply.
10. Refrain from saying, "Because I said so." or "How many times do I have to tell you!" Try "I expect you to" or "my expectation is ____". Be firm.
11. Try not to be personally offended (especially with older children)
12. Give yourself a break and learn from your mistakes; never be afraid to apologize for overreacting. Focus on what's going well and try again the next day.

**Keep in mind, helping children achieve self-discipline is a *process*; do not expect to see changes and "miracle" children overnight; it takes time and consistency. This journey will be much more enjoyable with the school faculty and parents working together! Remember these are *long term goals*.