

# Understanding Montessori

*The Kids Talk Way*



## Home Responsibilities Help Us Feel We Belong

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Family is about giving us a sense of belonging. Whatever ups and downs we have in life--changes in jobs, money, or health--family is where we know we can always go, and the door will be open. Strong families create powerful ties to their family and to each other through sharing responsibilities at home, church, school and work.

Many times in the need to get "something done", adults will dismiss our children's requests to help us. "Oh, just go outside and play" is one of our frequent replies. When we see the eagerness in a child's eyes and hear, "But I want to help!" we need to direct the child's energy in a loving and positive way.

"How can a three-year-old really help?" parents ask me. "It's more work cleaning up after them. It's easier to send them away."

When we send them away we are missing opportunities to foster a sense of belonging and ownership in our families. Imagine if we went to work at a new job,

full of enthusiasm, and our boss patted us on the head and said, " I'm busy. Keep yourself amused. We'll call you when it's lunchtime. Remember to stay out of the way."

Here are some age appropriate job ideas for two to six-year-olds for jobs that will help your children feel a sense of ownership and belonging. This list is cumulative and only suggests starting points.

### **Tasks for two-year-olds**

- \*Pick up toys and return to proper place.
- \*Put books and magazines in a rack.
- \*Sweep the floor.
- \*Place napkins and silverware on table.
- \*Clean up what they drop when eating.
- \*Give a choice of two foods for breakfast.
- \*Clear own place at the table.
- \*Toilet training.
- \*Brush teeth, wash hands and brush hair.
- \*Undress self.
- \*Wipe up own spills.
- \*Put food away from grocery sacks to shelves.

### **Tasks for three and four-year-olds.**

- \*Setting the table, even with good dishes.
- \*Put the groceries away.
- \*Help with grocery shopping and grocery list.
- \*Polish shoes and clean up afterwards.
- \*Follow a schedule for feeding pets.
- \*Help do yard and garden work.
- \*Make the beds and vacuum.
- \*Help do the dishes and fill the dishwasher.
- \*Dust the furniture.
- \*Have goal chart with tasks.
- \*Spread butter on sandwiches.
- \*Prepare cold cereal.
- \*Help prepare plates of food for family dinner.
- \*Make a simple dessert (jello, ice cream, yoghurt).
- \*Hold the hand mixer to whip potatoes or mix batter.
- \*Get the mail.
- \*Should be able to play without constant adult supervision.
- \*Fold laundry.
- \*Polish silver, brass and car.
- \*Sharpen pencils.

### **Tasks for five-year-olds**

- \*Help with meal planning and grocery shopping.
- \*Make own sandwich and simple breakfast. Clean up.
- \*Pour own drink.
- \*Prepare dinner table.
- \*Tear up lettuce for salad.
- \*Measure and pour ingredients for a recipe.
- \*Make bed and clean room.
- \*Dress and choose outfit.
- \*Scrub sink, toilet and bathtub.
- \*Clean mirrors and windows.
- \*Separate clothing for laundry.
- \*Answer and dial phone properly.
- \*Yard work.
- \*Pay for small purchases.
- \*Help clean out the car.
- \*Take out the garbage.
- \*Help make family entertainment decisions.
- \*Learn to tie shoes.
- \*Feed pets and clean the living area.

### **Tasks for six-year-olds**

- \*Choose clothing according to weather.
- \*Shake rugs.
- \*Water plants and flowers.
- \*Peel vegetables.
- \*Cook simple food (toast, hot dog, boiled eggs)
- \*Prepare own lunch for school.
- \*Hang up own clothes in closet.
- \*Gather wood for fireplace.
- \*Rake leaves and weeds.
- \*Take pet for a walk.
- \*Tie own shoes.
- \*Responsible for minor injuries.
- \*Keeping garbage container clean.
- \*Clean inside of car.
- \*Straighten and clean silverware drawer.

**Next Week:** Helping Your Child Learn to Listen