MY LEARNING TRAIN

Home Activity Suggestions

Home environment is the first learning base for children. Simple activities at home can help them develop socially, emotionally, physically, linguistically, and cognitively. Screen time is the new favourite but it must be monitored and balanced for overall development of children. Now that children are at home, we thought we must compile a list of activities that will help you to keep them busy and involved.

Montessori Activities for Practical Life

Practical life activities are applicable for all ages, even infants, and change depending on what the child can do at each stage of development. They can be broadly categorized into Care of Self and Care of Environment.

Introduce the activities to children carefully so that they observe each step. They need to understand that activities must be done patiently and a process needs to be followed.

- **Hand Hygiene**: tell children why it is important to keep hands clean.
  - While washing hands, caution them on not leaving taps open when they apply soap.
  - Railings are put to support children walking down the stairs. However, it must be explained to them that many people touch them and that is why washing hands is so important.

- **Dressing Up**: Hang an old shirt on a hanger and ask the children to button/hook it.

- **Bathing**: Help children learn about measurements (full/half/empty) and temperature (cool/warm/hot). Talk to them about safety of the body and hygiene. You could also help them observe their toys float/sink!

- **Brushing**: Oral hygiene is important (brushing teeth, gargling and keeping the mouth clean). Introduce each aspect and encourage children to brush their teeth twice a day. Explain how to massage the gums and rinse their mouth after eating.

- **Flushing and Toilet Hygiene**: Encourage children to follow the habit of leaving the toilet clean and dry. Talk to them about the importance of washing their hands after using the washroom. Explain to the children how to use public toilets and demonstrate basic toilet etiquette.

- **Washing**: Get children small buckets to wash hankie/clothes they can handle and dry them on the clothes line (put up at a height they can reach). Please do not forget to give them the clothes clips to clip on.

- **Toy Tub**: Plan a ‘Wash Your Toys’ Day in their old bathtubs. Explain to children why we need to keep toys clean.

**Kitchen Time**

- **Spoon Fun**: Place two bowls on a tray. Place a soup spoon beside the bowls. Put some cereal in one of the two bowls. Ask the children to shift the cereal to the other bowl. Pour milk on the cereal and let children enjoy the meal. In case the children have practised pouring, they can be given lukewarm milk to pour on their own.
- **Pouring**: Give the children a small jug and glass to pour water. Place a small towel on the tray so that he/she can wipe the water if it falls.

- **Peeling**: Give the children blunt peelers and cucumbers/carrots/radish/potato to peel.

- **Chopping**: Children can be given a chopping board/butter knife – plastic knife to peel and chop bananas/boiled potato.

- **Whisking**: Give the children a whisk to whisk curd.

- **Sorting**: Ask the children to sort and place vegetables in bags. Ask them to wash their hands after the activity.

- **Laying the Table**: Demonstrate how to lay a table. Place the things near the dining table and encourage them to set their place. Eventually, they can set the table for the family.

- **Serving**: Demonstrate how to hold and walk with a tray and encourage them to place and serve snacks/water.

- **Spreading**: Give the children soft butter/jam to spread on bread.

- **Sandwich-making**: Give the children butter/chopped vegetables and slices of bread to make a sandwich.

- **Rolling Pin**: Give the children a rolling pin and dough to roll out chapattis.

- **Savoury Snacks**: Give the children puffed rice, chopped tomatoes, cucumber, coriander and a lemon with a lemon squeezer. Place seasoning containers. Ask the children to make and eat the famous Bhel Puri for themselves.

- **Cookie Cutters**: Knead cookie/matri dough and roll it out for the children. Ask them to use the cookie cutters and cut the dough into different shapes. Bake/Fry and place them in a snack box for children.

- **Textures of Fruits and Vegetables**: Children can feel the textures of various fruits and vegetables to understand the concepts of rough/smooth.

- **Colours and Food**: Fruits and vegetables are a great source to teach the children colours. Introduce or revise the various colours using fruits and vegetables.

- **Kitchen and Vocabulary**: The kitchen is a great place to build vocabulary! For example, children can be introduced to words such as **in**, **on**, **big**, **small**, **round**, **square**, **bake**, **stir**, **cook**, **peel**, **mash**, **knead**, **bowls**, **dish**, **plate**, **glass**, **spoon**, **wash**, **washbasin**, **sink** and **dustbin**. Processes can also be explained. For example, the process of making tea can be explained by using the flowing words in order: **pan** → **water** → **tea leaves** → **milk** → **boil** → **strain and pour** → **mix sugar** → **mugs and cups** → **teatime**.

- **Cooking Time**: Have a fireless cooking time with fresh fruits and vegetables to encourage your child to eat fresh fruits and vegetables.

  - Make a boiled potato salad with your child.
  - Ask your child to arrange the salad on a tray and serve it.
Give your child cubes of 2 commonly available fruits and toothpicks. Ask them to pierce the fruits with the toothpicks and make a fruit shashlik for the family. You can do the same with vegetables.

**Home and Activity Time**

- **Dusting:** Give the children clean dusting cloth and demonstrate how they can dust their room. Encourage them to dust their room regularly.

- **Sweeping:** Make a small broom and get a dust pan for the children. Put it up on a hook and demonstrate how they can sweep, collect the dust in the pan and how to tip it into the dust bin. Children love to do this activity and will surprise adults on how they spot the smallest bit of waste lying on the floor!

- **Flower Arrangement:** Give the children a vase and flowers to arrange in it. Explain how to pour water and take care of the arrangement.

- **Dustbin Segregation:** Introduce the children to segregating waste into: plastic, paper, biodegradable waste and use the correct dustbins for their disposal.

- **Back in Place:** Play ‘I Spy…’ with the children and ask them to look for things that are out of their proper place. Ask the children to place them back in the space allotted to them.

- **Folding:** Give the children napkins and towels to fold and place in the washroom. Encourage them to learn to fold their clothes.

- **Pairing and Sorting:** Give the children washed pairs of socks to pair. Give the children washed clothes to sort and count.

**Safety and Discipline:** Self-discipline and good behaviour need to become an essential part of your child’s routine. Set rules. Both parents and grandparents must insist on them being followed as children feel confused when adults set different rules.

- **ID Card:** Make a home identity card with the address and details for your child and tell them how important it is to carry the identity card while going out in public places.

- **Let’s Play:** Play a game of **Chinese Whisper** where you whisper a short sentence into your child’s ear and they have to pass it on to the other members of the family. Slowly start whispering good habits to your child. Speak firmly but softly to correct bad behaviour if required. You have to help children to learn good habits by example.

- **Our Neighbours:** Make it point that they see you wishing them, greeting them, checking on them yet keeping a distance for medical safety.

- **Isolation and Home Care:** Explain to the children why it’s important to be indoors if one is unwell. Explain to them how we have to be responsible when we are ill so that other do not get ill.

- **Duty Chart:** Put up a fun duty chart of the things they have to help around the house. Include actions such as switching off lights, reminding people to sanitize hands, closing doors, and so on.
My World

- **Back to Nature:** Take your child on regular outdoor trips to be close to nature. Play outdoors with them. Do not keep children in air-conditioned environment all the time. Let them get some sun and fresh air.

- **Painting Pebbles:** Collect pebbles and paint them with your child.

- **Collage:** Collect leaves and make a collage with your child.

- **Texture Fun:** Let them feel the textures of the bark and leaves of trees. Mix two kinds of leaves for your child to sort.

- **Rainbow Colours:** Ask your child to squirt water in the sunlight to see the colours of the rainbow.

- **Shiny Mirror:** Dip a mirror in a clear glass of water and place the glass on a sunny window so that the sun shines on the glass and look for a rainbow on one of the walls.

- **Blowing in the Wind:** Ask your child to hang long strips of crepe paper/thin cloth on the window/balcony to see the wind direction.

- **Shape of the Clouds:** Watch the clouds and look out for various formations in them. Create a love for nature in your child. Encourage your child to switch off the lights when not in use. Let your child close taps and conserve water.

- **Maps:** Draw footprints from one end of a room to the other. Ask your child to step on them and reach the other end. Explain about maps.

- **Trekking with your Child:** Go on a short trek and explore the surroundings with them. Children have to experience and value natural things so that they can protect them.

- **Watering Plants:** Give the children small watering cans to water the plants and take care of them. Explain the importance of keeping the earth green and protected.

- **Moon and Star Gazing:** Step out and enjoy the night sky with the children.

- **Birds in Nature:** Watch with your child, the birds flying back in the evening. Ask your child to watch out for them alone and describe the birds to you.

- **Birds Feed:** Leave water and grains for the birds to feed on. Encourage your child to talk softly while observing them and not to startle them when they come to feed.

**Quiet Time:**

- **Book Corner:** Build a reading corner using a play tent/bean bag/dupatta draped on chairs. Encourage the children to sit peacefully and read.

- **Art Corner:** Encourage the children to sort and arrange all the art material they have. Usually there is so much available at home and not in order so we keep buying more and more – encourage children to reuse as well as recycle paper and resources.
• **Toys Corner:** Encourage children to sort their toys, wash and keep aside the ones they do not use and later share them with children who do not have toys.

### Physical Development

**Large Motor Skills:**
- catching and throwing a small and a big ball
- running
- cycling
- rolling
- hopping
- balancing on one foot
- crawling under the dining table
- jumping over a rope
- walking on lines
- climbing

**Small Motor Skills:**
- playing with puzzles and blocks
- fitting things in trays
- opening and closing bottle caps
- hanging clothes on a line and pegging them
- passing a lace through holes punched in greeting cards
- filling water bottles
- storing grains in containers
- scribbling on large sheets—drawing patterns left to right/right to left/top to bottom/bottom to top and
drawing curves/slants/and zigzag lines
- following and tracing dots
- drawing/writing on plain sheets
- painting
- clay/plasticine modelling