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top ideas to get you started

THE FMS LEARNING FROM HOME STARTER PACK FOR

Pre-Primary (3-6 years)



Forestville
MONTESSORI School
Thriving beyond...

COVID-19 sure has us all pivoting and flipping our thinking. When it comes to learning, we are focused on providing you with assistance that is practical, not overwhelming and as aligned as possible with our Montessori philosophy. As we've been creating these booklets, we've also been commenting on how this disruption is actually the kind of parent education we've been planning to provide as part of our strategic plan. Little did we know we'd be turning it around in under one week! A gift pack especially for you!

Welcome to the FMS *Learning from home starter packs*. We have prepared a different pack for all of our programs:

Under 3 (Birth-3 Years)
Pre-Primary (3-6 Years)
Lower Primary (6-9 Years)
Upper Primary (9-12 Years)

We hope that these packs along with the *Learning from home - Parent Handbook* which you can download from our website, are helpful.

Staff continue to design learning activities for the next phase of the FMS Learning from Home series. So watch this space. In the meantime, until our GOOGLE platform is ready, where students will be able to upload work, feel free to send us images and stories we can share of your children's Learning from Home experiences. Transparent Classroom also continues to be a source of information for you.

We're here for you. Call, email, keep in touch on social media. Help us to help you by staying connected.

"Character education cannot be taught. It comes from experience and not from explanation."

Maria Montessori

Denice Scala
Principal

1 Create a working space in a calm area of the house

Montessori classrooms are prepared environments that take the child's needs and abilities into account.

If the environment is prepared and your child can access the things that they need without too much assistance from you then you will begin to mirror the classroom environment that supports their independence, movement and concentration in your home environment. Most of the things you need you will probably have in your home already.



1 Create a working space in a calm area of the house



Think of these three things when preparing your home for your child:

- Items that the child uses need to be their size and fit for purpose so that they can achieve the desired task.
- Items that you want them to use are displayed at their eye level and they are able to access them independently. Anything that is not a choice should be put out of sight.
- Order and simplicity creates beauty and invites simple choices. If there is less choice than your child will engage with the activity for longer periods.



1 Create a working space in a calm area of the house

Walk around your home and begin to discuss with your child how we are going to set up some things together so they are a little similar to your class.

- Set up an area for your child to work: child size table and chair, large mat area.
- Set up a food area for your child's independent use.
 - Suggestions for breakfast – small container of cereal already measured out. Bowl and spoon out and ready on shelf, small jug of milk ready in fridge.
 - Suggestions for snack: You may also have 2 pieces of fruit and some crackers with a chopping board, apple cutter, butter knife, plate, fork that your child can use for snack throughout the day.
 - Water source: Have a jug with water available and a small cup so that your child can drink when they want to throughout the day.

- Create a quiet space such as a reading corner with access to books, pillows, a small comfortable chair.
- Create an art area that has paper, pencils, art supplies, scissors and glue available.
- Create a cleanup area that has a sponge, drying cloth/face washer or paper towels already torn off the roll, small dustpan and brush so that your child can help care for their home and keep it clean. Show them where to put the dirty cloths.
- Select 4 - 5 activities to put on a shelf as their work choices. Encourage choosing one item at a time and help them to pack away before choosing another item. Rotate these every 2-3 days or as interest fades.

2 The importance of routine

Children respond well to knowing how their day will unfold by the sequence of activities remaining as consistent as possible. The adult can set the broad daily routine and then let the child work independently within that framework.

You will begin to see your child work within the freedoms and limits of this broad framework as they will know what to expect and will feel comfortable to engage independently if their routine remains consistent.

When introducing the routine include your child in the discussion so that they feel a part of the decisions that are being made and include simple choices such as “do you want to choose free play from the shelf or we can go outside?”

A suggested daily routine:

Early morning	Breakfast – child helps make, pack away dishes, clean table. Child chooses and places fruit for snack in food area.
	Self care – brush teeth, get dressed, make bed.
	Free play – choice from shelf work.
Mid morning	Snack – child chooses from snack area and prepares at table, pack away dishes, clean table.
	Movement activity – outside in the yard, yoga, walk to the park/around the neighbourhood, bikes in driveway.
	Free play – choice from shelf work – art, construction, etc.
Lunchtime	Food Prep and Lunch completed with the child. Help prepare food, set the table, pour a drink.
	Choose some music to listen to or a podcast whilst eating lunch
	Pack away dishes and clean the table.
Mid afternoon	Independent Quiet time: reading books, listening to songs.
	Free Play – shelf work, gardening, outside activity.
	Snack – child chooses from snack area and prepares at table, pack away dishes, clean table.
Dinner	Dinner – child sets table for family members, helps to cook or serve, pours water for each member of the family.
	Helps to clear table.
Evening	Bath and Bedtime sequence.
	Read bedtime story and goodnight kiss.

* Please modify this sample routine to fit in with your family life.

3

Working independently

Free Play: Free play could mean a number of things. It could mean your child is playing with their choices from the shelf or you might be working with them on an activity that you want to introduce them to from the shelf.

The morning might be a good time to connect with your child and do activities together, remembering that it should be child led play. Other times free play is more independent and you can work in parallel to them, stepping in and out of the play.

Most children will understand not disturbing someone who is working so if you have a time of day that you wish to set as your own work time then discuss this with your child and let them know that it is Independent play time now, where we each do our own work. Stay present but they should respect your right to work as they do other children in their school environment.



3 Working independently



Quiet time: The mornings will be full of movement and activity with play and food prep scattered throughout the day. Introduce quiet time in the afternoon and provide a choice of where they wish to do it, either in their room or in a quiet space in the house. Provide them with activities such as books or podcasts that they can do during this time. Check out the list of podcasts in the '*FMS Learning from Home*' handbook.

Movement: If permitted, try to get outside once a day to connect with your neighbourhood and local nature spaces. Try to do this in all weather. If you need to stay indoors then dancing or a home obstacle course can be constructed.

Food preparation: Children are used to making their own snacks at school. They may be able to use an apple cutter with some help to push down, they may be able to cut a banana, peel an egg, spread butter, jam, avocado on bread or crackers as well as make simple recipes such as apple pie with puff pastry sheets.

4 Read aloud

We encourage parents to read aloud with their children as well as encourage the children to read to them if they are comfortable. This will help build their reading confidence and help them to further develop their reading and oral comprehension skills.

The children are used to being read to and some children can read early readers with some help with sight words.

Simple questions can guide comprehension and help children to infer beyond the text:

- What just happened in the story?
- What kind of person do you think so-and-so is?
- Why do you think someone did what they did?

Encourage them to ask you questions as well so that they have a chance to formulate questions that seek a deeper understanding of the text.

Top books for Early Readers:

- Dr Suess
- Oxford Reading Tree series – Julia Donaldson
- Decodable Readers Australia – also available as an app.
- Fitzroy Readers Series – also available as an app.

Chapter books for Read Alouds:

- Charlotte's Web
- The Enchanted Wood, Enid Blyton
- Little People, Big Dreams series.

Author's of picture books for shared reading:

- Mem Fox
- Alison Lester
- Pamela Allen
- Trace Moroney – Feelings books.

5 Working across the curriculum

Language:

Play the Sound Game. With your child collect 3-5 objects and place them on a table. They should all start with a different phonetic sound. Then say to your child “I spy... with my little eye something beginning with f” and they should say the object that begins with the letter sound. If they don’t you might point to it to lead them to the answer and say “yes, f, fork.”

Tell your child ‘real life’ stories. Retell stories of joint holidays together, grandparents growing up, fun times or real-life inventors and artists that you know. It will start a conversation with your child and give them the chance to practise their growing conversation skills.

Play the Bring Me Game. Collect 3-5 objects from around the house that your child does not know the name of e.g spatula, HDMI cable, soap dish, cake fork and point to each item and give them the name. Then go far away and ask your child to bring you an item. When they bring it ask them “what did you bring?” This helps to increase their vocabulary of their home environment and builds working memory. If your child is able to they can label or draw the items as well.



5 Working across the curriculum



Movement:

Act out a familiar family storybook or song. You can also make puppets for nursery rhymes such as 5 little ducks, 5 little monkeys or 5 green and speckled frogs that your child can use when singing those songs.

Incorporate large movement, carrying heavy objects, build an obstacle course inside or outside, dance to music, ride bikes, swim if you can, go on child led walks around your house or beyond your home if you can.

Think of developing the hand and their fine motor with activities such as clay work, scissors and using a variety of art mediums, pencils, chalk, paints, sewing, gardening.

5 Working across the curriculum

Practical Life:

Have your child help with all tasks of laundry:

- Sort clothes into colours and whites.
- Allow your child to pour laundry powder or liquid into the compartment, and turn on the washing machine.
- Carry wet washing in basket to line.
- Hang clothes and peg.
- Take dry clothes off the line.
- Fold and assist with ironing under supervision on a low setting.

Care of self. You will have time to allow your child to dress themselves, put on own shoes and socks and brush their teeth. Let your child know if they need help to ask and only help with the part they are having difficulty with.

Think of developing the hand and their fine motor with activities such as clay work, scissors and using a variety of art mediums, pencils, chalk, paints, sewing, gardening.



5

Working across the curriculum



Involve your child in food preparation for themselves and family food:

- Collect and sort the ingredients needed
- Collect the utensils that you will need.
- Measure out with your child the quantities needed.
- Mix, cut, cook and enjoy together.

5 Working across the curriculum

Physical Activity:

Being active is a great way to stay fit, healthy and have fun. This time can be achieved in many ways and doesn't have to be in one block. Short bursts throughout the day can offer a well needed brain boost and be just as effective.

Some children will naturally want to explore movement independently where as others may wish to engage with others in more organised activities and games. Here are some fun suggestions to get you started. Whatever your child chooses to do, feel free to give it a go yourself and the whole family get to enjoy the experience and reap the benefits of exercise.



5 Working across the curriculum

- Try building physical activity into your daily routine with practical life tasks – such as taking out the bins, vacuuming the house, raking leaves or finding your inner Karate Kid and cleaning the windows or car.
- If permitted, go outside to some open space and breath some beautiful fresh air, ride a bike, go for a bush walk, grab a ball or investigate the natural world around you.
- Create an indoor or outdoor obstacle course or circuit. No need for expensive sports equipment - be creative with what could be used as an obstacle: a cardboard box, a piece of string and a balloon could give you endless possibilities.
- Feed your mind and body with some Yoga or Tai Chi.

- Put on your favourite grooves or take a musical journey around the world: try moving like an animal, singing an old classic song with actions like ‘Heads, shoulders, knees and toes,’ or dancing like no one is watching.

