

## **Some of the Montessori Materials**

There are many materials about which you may have heard but have no clue what they do or what their purposes are. Here are a few examples of such:

### **CASA - Age Three to Six**

Spindle Boxes - 2 boxes with ten compartments-labeled 0 through 9. A basket of wooden spindles-45 in total. This material is used to give children an idea of the quantity that is represented by each number including zero. It is the first time that the concept of zero is introduced. The child continues by putting the appropriate amount in each numbered spot.

Pink Tower - 10 solid wood cubes, differing in length, width, and height. Their sizes grow in progression (related to 1 cubed to 10 cubed). The child develops visual and muscular perception of dimension, along with coordination of movement. There is also an indirect preparation for mathematics: as the cubes are representative of the base ten (decimal system) and will be later used for cubing lessons.

Sandpaper Letters - wooden box containing all the letters of the alphabet made out of sandpaper and mounted on a smooth surface. The letters are introduced by tracing each and sound them out. The sounds are crisp and clear and are taught by threes in a Three Period Lesson (the teacher presents-"this is...", the child practices recognition-"show me...", and then the teacher assesses-"what is...?"). The other purpose for the tracing is to model and form the correct letter formations to be used when printing.

### **Age Six to Nine and Age Nine to Twelve**

We now leave the sensitive period for order and go on to much bigger concepts. Children are given many "impressionistic" lessons that lead to prolonged periods of intense concentration and study. Some of the most common materials that are:

Grammar Boxes- there is a sensitive period for these-between the ages of 6 to 8.5. These boxes clearly distinguish between each word in a phrase or sentence and give symbols to each part of speech. Children sequentially move through these boxes and build their knowledge of sentence structure as well as are exposed to many different words-and their meaning and importance to a sentence. The work is experiential and is always introduced by an oral story that is engaging and has movement for the child. When the child has worked extensively with the boxes, they may then symbolize their own sentences/paragraphs/stories (or someone else's-like their favorite author or a friend's piece of work)

Math in the Millions - there are a few specific materials that the child in the Six to Twelve program moves through that represent bigger numbers-up to the millions!! There is an inner need by the child to work with bigger numbers and longer periods of problem

solving with those numbers. Watch out for the Checkerboard and Large Bead Frame for long multiplication and the Test Tubes for long division.

Geometry - There are boxes that are in all the rooms called the Constructive Triangles Boxes-the young child manipulates these sensorially, while the older child uses them to explore equivalency and congruency. We also use a box which contains sticks of various lengths called the Geometry Sticks. These are used to demonstrate visually all the lines and shapes lessons needed-horizontal, vertical, oblique, parallel, transversals, convergent, divergent, and so on!

I hope this gives you a little idea of some of the materials that we use in the classrooms.

Kind Regards, Miss Debbie