

# HOMESPUN MONTESSORI



AN EASY-TO-FOLLOW GUIDE TO THE  
MONTESSORI METHOD

## *Introduction*

*In Montessori education, the preschool years (from zero to six) are known as the formative years. During this phase of development, the child has an extremely absorbent mind. First the child unconsciously learns basic human abilities by observing his environment. Then the child begins to develop these abilities through imitation of adults and interaction with learning materials and other children.*

*The purpose of this booklet is to provide teachers, parents, and volunteers with a basic introduction to the Montessori teaching method. We will explore eight simple Montessori lessons that are easy to introduce into any work environment. You will become a role model for the child as he wants to imitate your every move. This is why it's so important to create a positive work environment for the child. Always be aware of your attitude, language, movement and behavior— the child will absorb all of these in order to develop his own personality.*

*Our hope is that exposure to these lessons will serve as a tool for understanding the fundamental principles of Montessori:*

- Observation of the child and the child's needs*
- Individual liberty for the child*
- Careful preparation of the work environment*

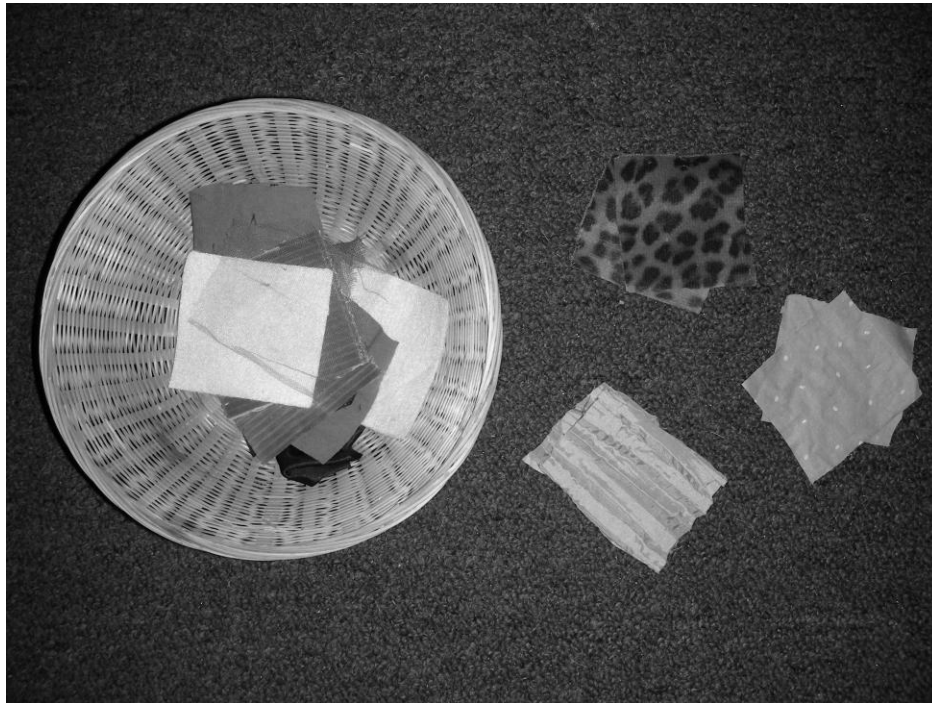
*We also hope you will be intrigued by the value of a Montessori education, and will further explore Montessori as an alternative to traditional education.*

*For the children at La Fundación Hilda  
Rothschild in Joya Grande, El Salvador*

# SENSORIAL ACTIVITIES

# Fabric Basket

Overview: The child matches different pairs of textured fabrics. The purpose of this lesson is to develop the child's tactile sense.



## Materials Needed:

- Assorted pieces of fabrics (cotton, silk, wool, corduroy, etc.)
- Basket to hold fabric pieces
- Scissors

How to Make: Cut out two small squares from each fabric. Store fabric pairs in basket.

How to Teach: Start with three pairs of fabrics, feeling each piece with your fingers. Ask the child to do the same. Look away as you feel each piece and match up the three pairs. Mix up the fabric pairs and ask child to match them. Encourage the child to look away, close his eyes, or wear a blindfold when matching. Add more fabrics when lesson is mastered with three pairs.

Control of Error: The last pair won't match.



# Smell Bottles

Overview: The child smells bottles to match pairs that have the same scent. The purpose of this lesson is to develop the child's sense of smell, making the child aware of similar and different scents.



## Materials Needed:

- 10 small containers (pill bottles, film canisters, etc.)
- Assorted dry spices (tea leaves, curry, coffee, clove, etc.)
- 2 different colors of construction paper
- Tape
- Scissors
- Markers

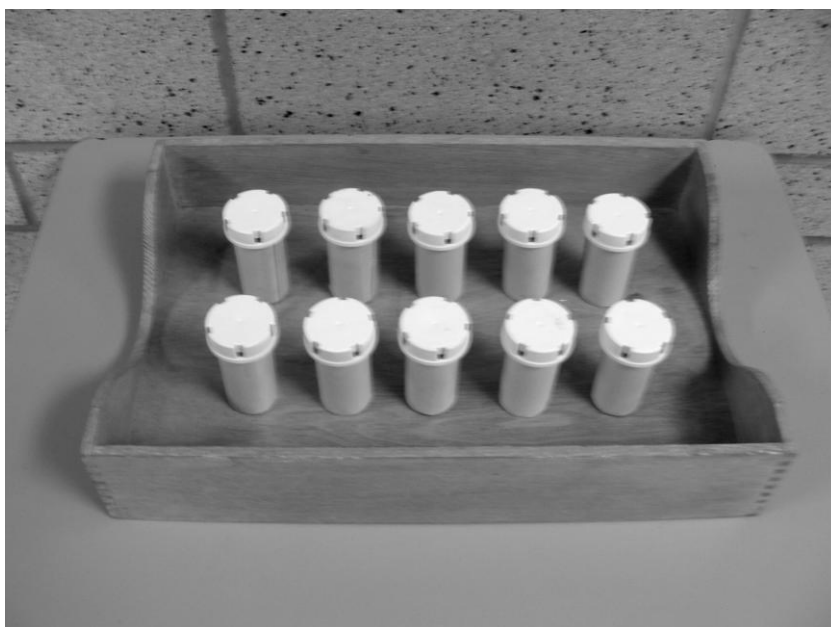
**How to Make:** Cut construction paper to cover the outside of each container. Tape the paper onto the containers, covering five in one color, and the remaining five containers in a different color. Fill two containers (one of each color) with the same dry spice. If lids of containers are difficult for children to open, cover the tops of containers with a piece of coffee filter and secure it with a rubber band. Mark the bottom of each paired container with a distinct color.

**How to Teach:** Smell a couple of containers one at a time to demonstrate different scents. Ask the child to do the same. Separate the containers by color. Pick up and smell one container. Try to match it with its pair from the other group, smelling each container until its match is found. Repeat until all scents are paired.

**Control of Error:** The last pair won't smell the same. If the child has incorrectly matched the scents, then the colored marks on the bottoms of the containers will also be incorrectly matched.

## Sound Bottles

Overview: The child shakes bottles to match pairs that have the same sound. The purpose of this lesson is to develop the child's auditory sense.



### Materials Needed:

- 10 small containers (pill bottles, film canisters, etc.)
- Sound items (beans, rice, rocks, beads, etc.)
- 2 different colors of construction paper
- Tape
- Scissors
- Markers

How to Make: Cut construction paper to cover the outside of each container. Tape the paper onto the containers, covering five in one color, and the remaining five containers in a different color. Fill two containers (one of each color) with the same sound item. Mark the bottom of each paired container with a distinct color.

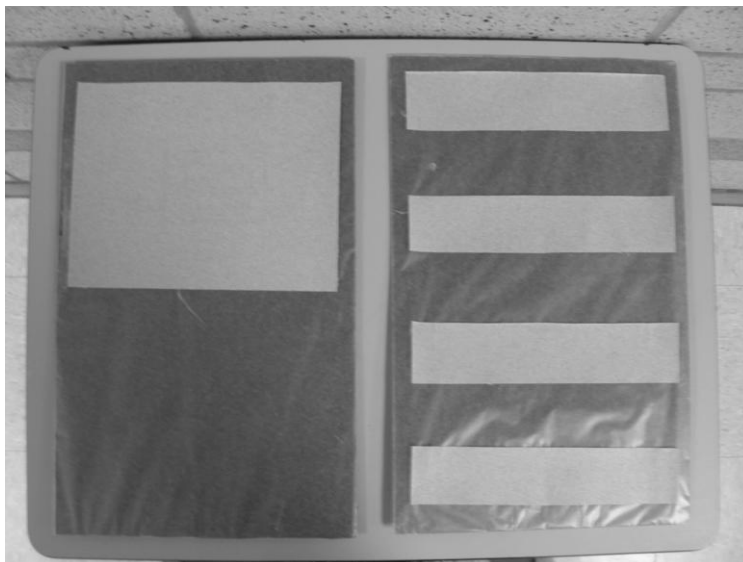
How to Teach: Shake a couple of containers one at a time to demonstrate different sounds. Ask the child to do the same. Separate the containers by color. Pick up and shake one container. Try to match it with its pair from the other group, shaking each container one at a time until its match is found. Repeat until all sounds are paired. When this lesson is mastered, encourage the child to organize the pairs from loudest to softest.

Control of Error: The last pair won't sound the same. If the child has incorrectly matched the sounds, then the colored marks on the bottoms of the containers will also be incorrectly matched.



## Touch Boards

Overview: The child feels the texture on two different boards. This lesson helps the child develop his sense of touch and aids in the child's motor control, preparing the child for writing.



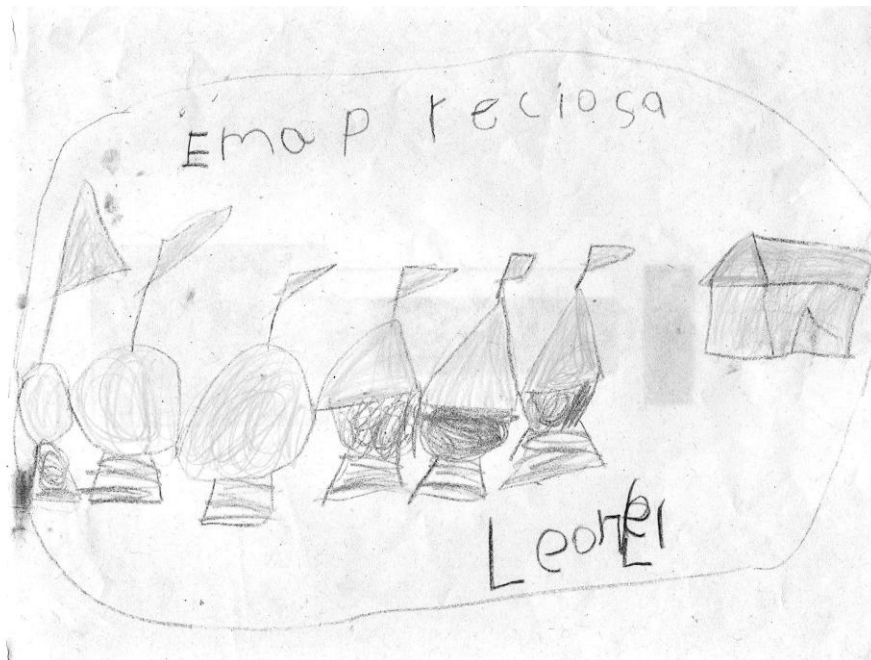
### Materials Needed:

- 2 boards of the same size (smooth wood, plastic, matboard, etc.)
- Sandpaper
- Glue
- Scissors

How to Make: Cut a piece of sandpaper to cover about half of one board. Glue that piece to the top half of the board. Cut four smaller rectangular strips of sandpaper. Glue these strips to the other board, leaving a space equal to the size of one strip between each piece of sandpaper.

How to Teach: Name the boards 1 and 2 (Board 1 has the big piece of sandpaper, Board 2 has multiple smaller strips of sandpaper). Feel Board 1 with your index and middle fingers, lightly moving them from top to bottom. As your fingers move, say “This is rough” and “This is smooth.” Ask the child to do the same. Once the child understands the difference between the two textures, introduce Board 2. Feel and explain the textures the same way you did for Board 1. Ask the child to feel the strips and classify the textures as “rough” or “smooth.”

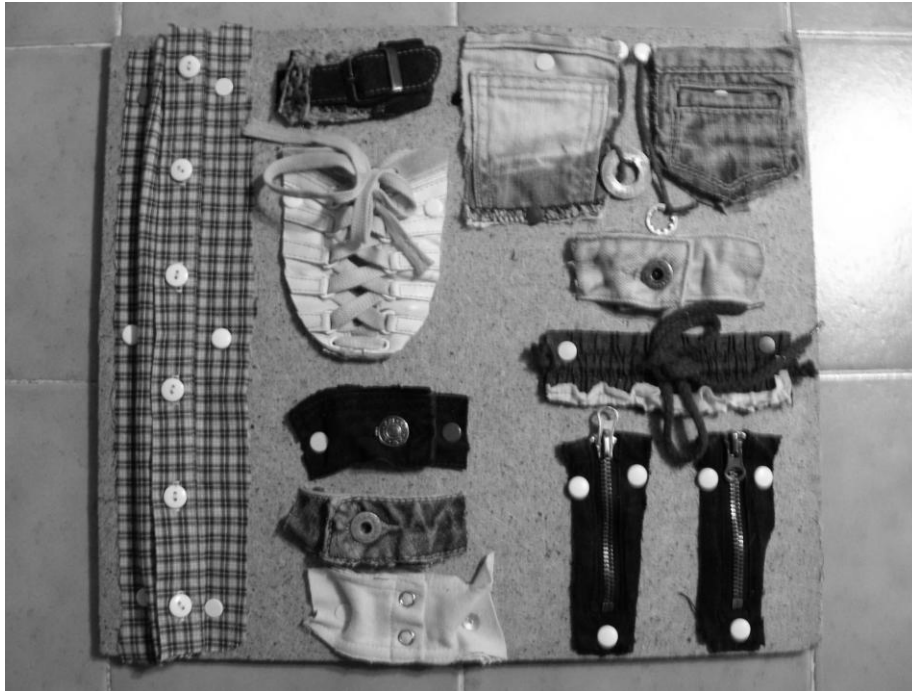
Control of Error: The child isn’t able to distinguish the difference between rough and smooth.



# PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

# Busy Board

Overview: The child works with a wooden board covered in different pieces of fabric that have hooks, buttons, zippers, etc. The purpose of this lesson is to teach the child self-reliance and coordination of movements.



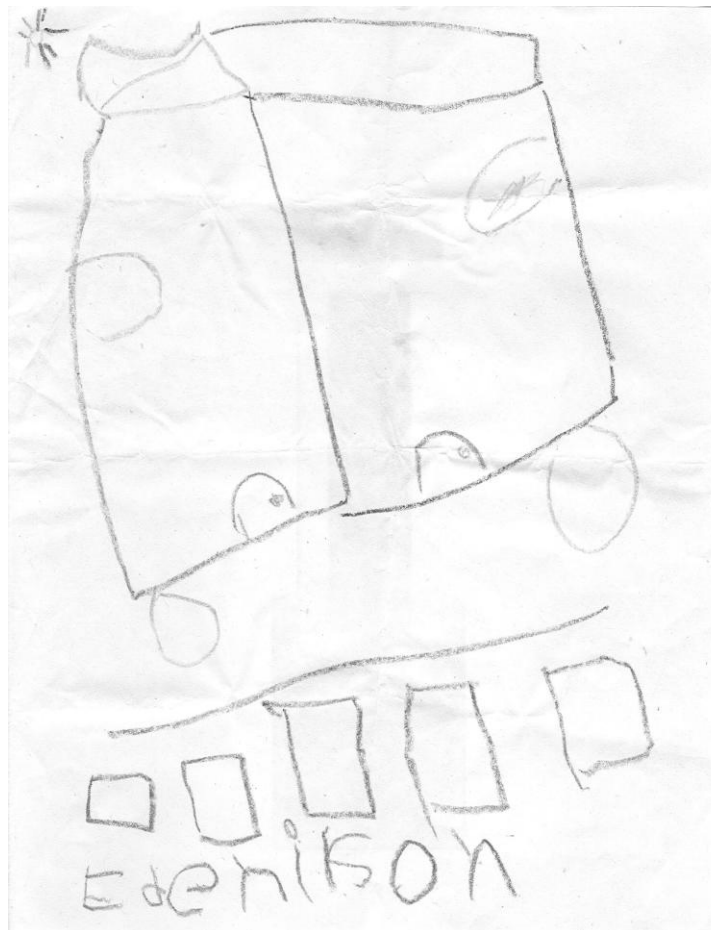
## Materials Needed:

- A wooden board (approx. 12" by 18")
- Pieces of fabric with zippers, buttons, snaps, ties, buckles, etc.
- Thumb tacks

How to Make: Pin each piece of fabric to the board using tacks. When attaching the pieces, leave some flexibility so the child will be able to work easily.

How to Teach: Present board to the child with every item already zipped up, snapped, buttoned, etc. Slowly undo and reassemble each item. Tell the child the names of each item and allow the child to feel the pieces. Let the child work with the board.

Control of Error: The child will be able to see if an item has been done improperly.



# Pouring

Overview: The child pours rice or beans from a pitcher into a cup. The purpose of this lesson is to teach the child self-reliance and the proper way to pour.



## Materials Needed:

- Pitcher
- Cup
- Tray
- Rice or beans

How to Make: Fill pitcher with rice or beans. Place pitcher and cup on the tray.

How to Teach: Name the objects (“pitcher,” “cup,” “handle,” “spout”). Grasp the pitcher in one hand and the cup in the other. Hold the pitcher over the rim of the cup. Pour beans slowly from the pitcher to the cup. Let the child have a turn. When this lesson is mastered, use water instead of beans. If water spills, teach the child to clean up the mess with a sponge.

Control of Error: Spills occur.

# ARITHMETIC ACTIVITIES

# Spindle Box

Overview: The child places the specified number of spindles (long, slender rods) in each compartment. The lesson introduces the concept of zero and teaches the relationship of quantities and numbers.



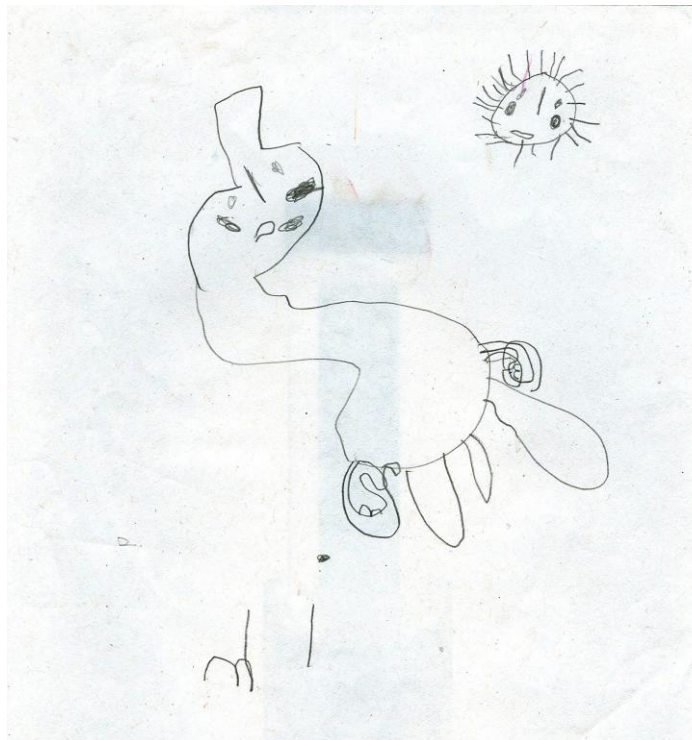
## Materials Needed:

- Box that can be divided into 10 sections (made from wood, a cardboard box top, etc.)
- 45 spindles (pencils, wooden skewers, straws, etc.)

How to Make: Divide box into 10 sections. Number the sections 0 through 9. Place the specified number of spindles in each corresponding section.

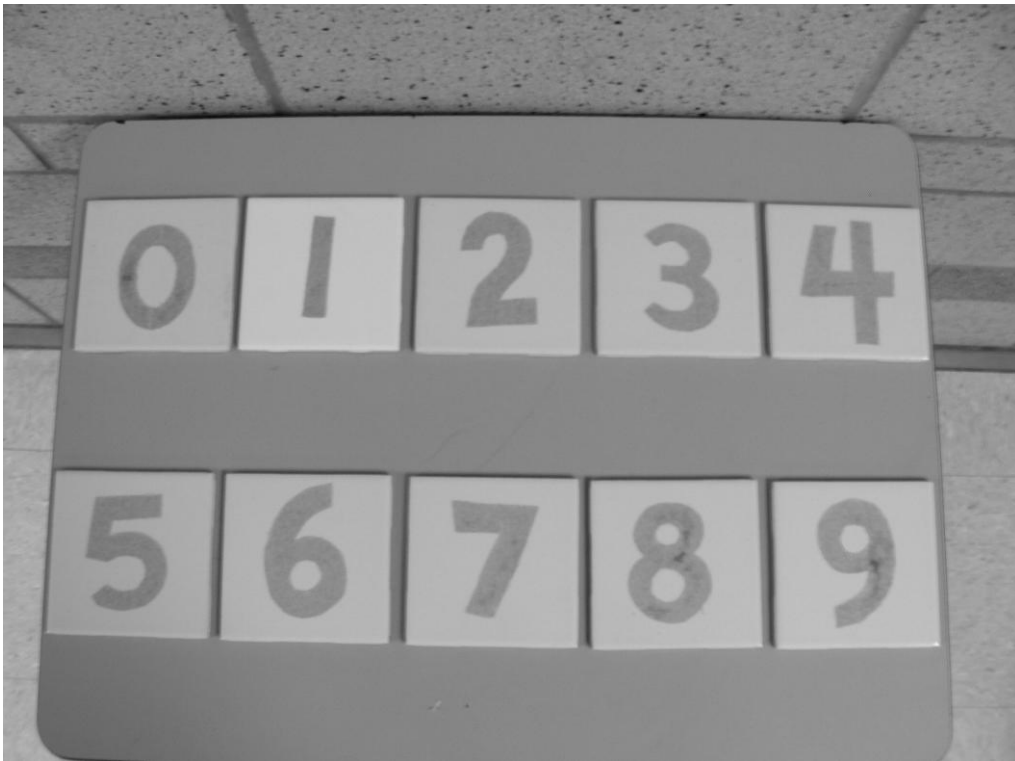
How to Teach: Point to the “1” compartment and say “one.” Remove the one spindle from this section and count it by saying “one” again. Return the spindle to the “1” compartment. Continue in this manner for the rest of the compartments. When all spindles are in their correct sections point to the “0” compartment, say “zero,” and show that no spindles belong in this section.

Control of Error: The child will know that he has made a mistake if there are not enough spindles to fill the last compartment correctly, or there are spindles left over at the end.



# Sandpaper Numbers

Overview: The child feels each sandpaper number on slates. The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the symbols associated with quantities the child is learning to recognize, and to prepare the child for writing these symbols.



## Materials Needed:

- 10 slates (matboard, cardboard, bathroom tiles, etc.)
- Sandpaper
- Glue
- Scissors

How to Make: Cut out the numbers 0 through 9 from sandpaper. Glue each number to a different slate.

How to Teach: Demonstrate how to feel the numbers by lightly touching them with your index and middle fingers. Make smooth and continuous motions as you move your fingers over the sandpaper in the same manner you would write the number. Say “zero” and trace it with your fingers. Ask the child to do the same. Continue in this manner through the number 4. Once the child understands this lesson, introduce the remaining numbers.

