

HELPING HANDS

Environment & Washing

This Toolbox will help you teach your child awareness and care for their environment. They will be able to participate actively in their family, which will allow them to become active participants in society later on.

Preparing The Environment - To set your child up for success, make sure to have all of the parts of each activity prepared and set up ahead of time. For example: only have enough water in the creamer that the bowl won't overflow when they pour it into the bowl. Use a small piece of masking tape as a visual for the "fill line".

Pouring Water - Using the creamer, demonstrate for your child how to pour water into the bowl, and then back into the creamer. While this seems like a very simple activity, it is necessary to build coordination and concentration.

Cleaning An Object - In addition to the creamer, bowl, sponge, towel, and drying cloth, you will need a small object for your child to wash. Go through the process of washing the object, using the creamer to pour the water, getting the sponge wet and soapy, washing the object in the bowl, then drying it with the towel. Equally important for this activity is having the child help clean up and put things away.

Whisking - Flake off a few pieces of soap into the bowl and have the child pour a little water in. Then, have them use the whisk to make bubbles. You could also use a dropper bottle filled with liquid soap. This activity is mostly about building fine motor skills, controlling the movements so that they don't spill water everywhere, and learning about the process.

Cleaning With A Sponge - Using the sponge provided, demonstrate to your child how to clean up water spills with it.

Basic And Advanced Spraying - We've provided 2 different sprayer nozzles so that you can choose the one that works best for your child.

Cleaning The Leaves Of A Plant - Use the sprayer filled with just water to spray the leaves of a plant. Then, use cotton balls or a towel to gently wipe them off. This is a great activity if you have plants with large leaves that tend to get dusty! Just make sure that any plants you allow your child to clean are not poisonous.

Environment & Washing, continued

Make Your Own Cotton Swab - [see video instructions for demonstration] Use a small amount of cotton, and wrap it around the blunt tip of one of the orange sticks. This can be a challenging activity as it requires a bit of skill to get the cotton to stay.

Mirror Polishing - You will need the sprayer bottle (filled with a bit of vinegar and water, or just water), some of the cotton swabs that you made, the towel, and the mirror. Demonstrate for your child how to spray the mirror, use the towel to dry it, and then the cotton swabs to dry the corners and get any details. Then, allow your child to do this all themselves. You can use the sprayer and towel to have your child learn to clean windows and mirrors around your house as well.

Sweeping & Folding

Helping Hands focuses on Practical Life, which is important for a child's development. The activities in this Toolbox will help your child develop control of movement and coordination, while building independence and confidence.

Sweeping - Sprinkle some rice, beans, or even crinkle paper from the Toolbox packaging onto a table or the floor. Then, have your child use the brush to sweep them into a pile. We recommend using tape on the floor or table to make a square for the child to sweep the material into. Once they learn this skill, you can have them help you sweep the house!

Folding - Prepare the napkins ahead of time by using the chalk provided to draw folding lines onto the napkins. The first will be folded in half, the second into quarters, the third into thirds, the fourth into thirds and then in half. We used to sew the lines into the napkins for you, but wanted to provide more versatility for you to change the folding lines and adapt them to your child's skill level. For instance, you can draw just a single line on all four napkins so they can practice folding all of them in half. After the napkins are prepared, demonstrate how to fold them by using your finger to trace the fold line, then matching the ends together. Once your child has mastered basic folding, then they can try doing napkin origami. [See online resources for more detailed instructions]

Sweeping & Folding, continued

Helping With Laundry - Start with teaching your child how to fold simple items like washcloths or small towels, and matching socks, then move on to more complicated folds as they master those simple ones. This is a great way to start teaching them responsibility and having them contribute to the family in a meaningful way.

Felt Clothing

Like most Montessori activities, Practical Life requires concentration and focus, which are essential to forming an orderly way of thinking.

Clothespins Onto Edge Of Bowl - Place the clothespins into the bowl, and demonstrate for your child how to open and close them. Place them on the edge of the bowl. Then, allow your child to do this themselves. This builds fine motor skills and will prepare them to be able to use the clothespins with the felt clothes.

Cutting Practice - You can have your child practice cutting by printing out the felt clothing printable, available on the resources page. We have included some simple pieces, and some that are more complex.

Cutting Felt Clothes, 2 Methods - Depending on the skill level of your child, you can cut out the felt clothes for them, or have them do it themselves. Here are two ways that we recommend cutting them out:

 Cut out the clothing pattern, pin it to the felt, and then cut around the pattern.

 Cut out and trace the pattern directly onto the felt. Use the traced lines as a guide to cut.

Hanging Felt Clothes - Prepare the "laundry line" by stringing it between two objects, such as chairs or stands. Make sure it is not too high for your child to reach. Then, demonstrate how to hang the felt clothing on the line. Depending on their skill level, you can have them hang the clothes in order by size. If you have a laundry line at your house, you can have your child help you hang clothes there as well.

Wash And Hang A Small Cloth - Once your child has mastered both the washing activity and hanging the felt clothes, you can show them how to wash a small cloth and then hang it to dry.