

THE ULTIMATE MONTESSORI HOMESCHOOL PLANNING CHECKLIST

Montessori guides spend weeks planning and preparing their classroom environments, because they know that careful preparation equals less stress and more learning during the school year. You're a guide now, so I've created this checklist to help you start your year off right!

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Start by reading through the entire thing once. Then, pick the area that you feel would be the quickest win, and work through that section of the checklist. Then move on to the next one, and the next.

This preparation and planning work is meant to be done over several weeks, taking into account your children's ages, interests, and learning goals (as well as your own needs!). These are suggestions - not "should's" - so use your own judgement and don't be afraid to change things up throughout the year! I've also included space for you to add your own needs.

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Now, let's get planning!

PHYSICAL SPACE

Work areas: Where will you and your children work?

- ☐ Use the kitchen/dining room table (have a plan for clearing off before meals)
- ☐ Art table (great for messy projects, cover with vinyl for easy wipe-downs)
- ☐ Lap/floor table (here's [our favorite](#))
- ☐ Individual rugs (here's [our favorite](#))
- ☐ Other: _____

Relaxation areas: Is there space to decompress?

- ☐ Bean bag chair
- ☐ Reading nook
- ☐ Audiobook/music listening station
- ☐ Other: _____

Workflow storage: Where will your children store their finished work, their on-going work, and their journals?

- ☐ Cubbies
- ☐ Hanging file folders
- ☐ Magazine racks
- ☐ Other: _____

What makes your environment beautiful and inviting?

- ☐ Plants (offer variety: flowering and non-flowering, different kinds of leaves, air plants, climbing plants, etc.)
- ☐ Art work (at child's eye level)
- ☐ Artifacts (nature tray, small antiques, interesting collections of objects)
- ☐ Other: _____

MATERIALS

Will you have all the materials out or rotate? (Both are valid depending on your home and lifestyle)

STORING MATERIALS ON SHELVES (always having them out)

- ☐ Use [plate racks](#) for three-part cards and booklets.
- ☐ Boxes can be labeled and stacked (within reason and neatly).
- ☐ To keep toddlers out of materials, consider [multi-tiered tackle boxes](#).
- ☐ Invest in fabric materials you can roll up (I like [Branch to Bloom's](#) options).
- ☐ Other: _____

STORAGE IN CLOSET (rotation)

- ☐ Designate a closet (or part of one) for materials you're not using.
- ☐ Store large materials in boxes and make an inventory list for easy retrieval.
- ☐ Store three-part cards in a file folder or [plastic drawers](#).
- ☐ Teacher Tip: Ziploc bags keep little cards together, even if rubber bands break. Remember to reuse the bags.
- ☐ Set up a lending library with friends so you can share three-part cards and other materials.
- ☐ Other: _____

BOOKS

- ☐ Start a small home library with reference books that align with and expand on the Montessori Great Stories. (Check out our favorites [here!](#))
- ☐ Place fiction books in the child's room/in the reading nook/next to the couch.
- ☐ Organize non-fiction books by general subject (biology, geography, history, etc.)
- ☐ Use a [front-facing bookshelf](#) to feature interesting books (rotate frequently to kindle interest and spontaneous exploration).
- ☐ Get a library card for each eligible child. (Yes, even the toddlers. You'll need them, I promise.)
- ☐ Start researching and placing holds on books for the coming month's theme (if you're doing a theme).

SUPPLIES

In most Montessori classrooms, children have communal supplies to encourage sharing, care of materials, and problem-solving. Consider doing the same at home to help your children develop these abilities.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- ☐ Establish rules for taking turns, re-stocking, and caring for the supplies.
- ☐ Role-play how to ask for a turn and how to borrow items.
- ☐ Keep supplies manageable and limited to one or two of each, so it's evident when items are mistreated or go missing.
- ☐ Purchase quality over quantity.
- ☐ Include "care of supplies" in your family's daily chores or responsibilities.
- ☐ Other: _____

SUPPLIES

Essential writing supplies:

- ☐ [Erasers](#)
- ☐ [Sharpener](#)
- ☐ [Graphite pencils](#)
- ☐ [Colored pencils](#)
- ☐ [Pens](#)
- ☐ Other: _____

Optional Writing Supplies:

- ☐ [Gel pens](#)
- ☐ [Calligraphy pens](#)
- ☐ [Markers](#)
- ☐ Other: _____

Essential Paper Supplies:

- ☐ Lined paper (by age/ability level)
- ☐ Graph paper (by age/ability level)
- ☐ [Story paper](#)
- ☐ White paper
- ☐ [Construction paper](#)
- ☐ Lined writing journal
- ☐ Other: _____

Optional paper Supplies:

- ☐ [Tracing paper](#)
- ☐ [Watercolor paper](#)
- ☐ Stationary
- ☐ Other: _____

Art Supplies:

- ☐ [Art cart](#) or [Lazy Susan](#)
- ☐ [Hole punch](#)
- ☐ [Paint brushes](#) (assorted)
- ☐ [Crayons](#)
- ☐ [Oil pastels](#)
- ☐ [Watercolors](#)
- ☐ [Acrylic paints](#)
- ☐ [Tempera](#)
- ☐ [Ink pads](#)
- ☐ Glue: [liquid](#) and [sticks](#)
- ☐ [Molding clay](#)
- ☐ Other: _____

Handwork Supplies:

- ☐ Yarn
- ☐ Knitting needles
- ☐ Crochet hooks
- ☐ [Embroidery thread](#)
- ☐ Sewing thread
- ☐ Sewing needles
- ☐ Pincushion
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Buttons
- ☐ Felt and fabric
- ☐ [Knife](#) and [wood](#) (for whittling)
- ☐ Other: _____

PLANNING AND RECORD-KEEPING

Student Records

If this is your first year homeschooling, contact your child's former school and request records. You are your child's new "school" and as such, you have a right to all records. For Montessori students, these would include:

- ☐ Copies of narrative progress reports
- ☐ Copy of the teacher's master record form (showing all the lessons the child has gotten)
- ☐ Child's work portfolio and/or work file
- ☐ Child's writing journal

If you homeschooled last year, take some time to look through:

- ☐ Your record book
- ☐ Observation notes
- ☐ Child's work samples
- ☐ Writing journal

Look at your country's academic standards and research your country's homeschooling expectations. Requirements might include:

- ☐ Submitting a letter of intent or an academic plan
- ☐ Keep a record of subjects taught
- ☐ Turning in work samples
- ☐ Taking assessments on a regular basis

Before you start planning lessons, consider:

- ☐ What skills does my child show real-life mastery in? (Skills he can apply without materials or guidance)
- ☐ What skills do they understand but still require materials and/or guidance to apply?
- ☐ What skills are they ready to start working on?
- ☐ What skills do they need to be exposed to by the end of the school year?
- ☐ What will happen if my child doesn't learn these skills by the end of the school year?
- ☐ What are my child's main interests, and how can I tie these in with the skills they need to develop?

Planning and Record-Keeping Tools

For you:

- ☐ A month-by-month wall calendar (for scheduling field trips, play dates, appointments, etc.)
- ☐ Homeschool planner
- ☐ Observation notebook

For your children:

- ☐ Manipulable [wall calendar](#)
- ☐ Small journal (blank or lined)

PLANNING FOR THE FIRST WEEKS

Experienced guides over-plan for the first weeks, and then adjust based on the children's interests. I encourage you to do the same.

Curriculum

The Montessori curriculum comes in the form of albums, which are a collection of lessons across all subject areas. They hold part of the secret to what makes Montessori so great, because the lessons speak to the children's interests and developmental stage. However, it can be difficult for a person without Montessori training to learn how to use the albums effectively. To overcome this challenge, I'm creating a lesson sequence timeline that will allow you to see the entire continuum of lessons across the elementary years, while also zeroing in on the lessons your specific child needs right now. [Join the waitlist](#) to be notified when this resource becomes available for purchase.

Great Lessons

- ☐ Read through the Great Lessons, take notes on the main points, and practice telling it without reading it.
- ☐ Make sure you have all the necessary charts, timelines, demonstrations for the Great Lessons.
- ☐ Interested in learning how to tell the Great Stories (and other stories) at home? Join my [Montessori Storytelling mini-course waitlist](#)!

Monthly Theme

Monthly themes are not mandatory, and for some families they cause unnecessary stress and pressure. However, they can also offer predictability and a foundation for other explorations. If you choose to implement a monthly theme, consider the following:

- ☐ Tie it in with other subjects. Here are some examples:
 - ☐ September: Fall Equinox (geography, history, geometry)
 - ☐ October: Pumpkins and Gourds (biology, music, culinary arts, history, visual arts)
 - ☐ November: Corn (biology, fundamental human needs, industry & trade)
- ☐ Prepare the materials and lessons you'll need ahead of time:
 - ☐ Artifacts
 - ☐ Library books
 - ☐ Oral stories
 - ☐ Demonstrations
 - ☐ Crafts
 - ☐ Three-part cards (use these after everything else on this list)
- ☐ Shoot for one themed lesson and follow-up activity per week so you don't overwhelm yourself and your children.
- ☐ Plan field trips and workshops aligned with your theme (e.g. pumpkin patch visit).
- ☐ Release expectations if you don't get around to exploring the theme.

Read-Alouds and Poetry

- ☐ Read-alouds are a foundational part of any homeschool, because they promote connection, imagination, empathy, and curiosity. Strive for a daily read-aloud session
- ☐ Choose an engaging fiction book for your first read-aloud. Need ideas for books that kids of most ages will enjoy? [Find them here!](#)
- ☐ Select a couple of children's poetry books OR print a few poems and place them in page protectors.
- ☐ Pick a spot near the couch to keep your read-aloud book and poetry (a basket works well), so you can quickly pull them out when your children are gathered (nothing worse than having to hunt down a book!)
- ☐ Remember: You don't HAVE to read on the couch. Consider reading on the patio swing or outdoors under the shade of a tree.
- ☐ Let your children use their hands quietly while you read; LEGOs, handwork, clay, and coloring are all quiet activities that keep children engaged while they listen (consider a "quiet basket" to store these reading-time activities).

Hands-On Collaborative Activities

Elementary children thrive on hands-on collaborative activities that help them apply their skills and gather new knowledge. These activities are natural extensions of Practical Life, and lead to a love of work and learning. Here are some activities you and your children can participate in:

- ☐ Gardening
- ☐ Cooking
- ☐ Repairing and maintaining a bicycle
- ☐ Woodworking
- ☐ Building furniture
- ☐ Knitting
- ☐ Building electronics
- ☐ Wrapping presents
- ☐ Making care packages
- ☐ Sewing
- ☐ Birding
- ☐ Nature Clean-Up
- ☐ Other: _____

Rhythm & Routine

Use the summer months to explore different daily rhythms. Ask yourself the following questions:

- ☐ Which children are early risers? Which ones are night owls?
- ☐ When are they most focused and ready to learn?
- ☐ What are the best times of the day for: independent play, screen time, outdoor time, meals, naps, bedtime, quiet time, read-aloud time, chores?
- ☐ Are there any fixed classes that you need to work around?
- ☐ What are YOUR needs: work, lesson prep, material-making, cooking, chores, reading, self-care, etc.

Chores

Your children need to be in charge of their learning environment, and it's a parent's job to hold that boundary. With your children:

- ☐ Make a list of what needs to be done daily and weekly.
- ☐ Work together to turn it into a chart of some sort.
- ☐ Discuss with the children who will be in charge of doing what.
- ☐ Talk about what tools are needed for the chores (cloths, duster, spray bottle, etc.)
- ☐ Give them choices for when to do their jobs.
- ☐ Hold them accountable.

BEYOND THE HOME

Planning Field Trips

Put together a list of all the places in your city and surrounding areas (organize by subject for ease of use):

- ☐ Museums
- ☐ Zoos/Aquariums
- ☐ Films
- ☐ Nature preserves
- ☐ Exhibits
- ☐ Galleries
- ☐ Festivals
- ☐ Tours
- ☐ Other: _____

Tip: Research yearly passes to the places your children might be most interested in visiting repeatedly.

Finding Community

One of the most important elements of homeschooling is your community. Homeschooling wasn't meant to be done alone. Your children need social interactions and you need support and encouragement from parents walking the same path. Here are some ideas for building community:

- ☐ Join a local online homeschool group (check Facebook and Google groups).
- ☐ Find out about upcoming playdates, workshops, clubs, and co-ops that align with your child's interests.

- Please use this space for additional notes:

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