



# IMS

## ORIENTATION BOOKLET

MONTESSORI FIRST STEPS GROUP  
2022 – 2023

# WELCOME TO THE IMS MONTESSORI FIRST STEPS GROUP!

We would like to offer you a warm welcome to the IMS Montessori First Steps Groups. The early years of a child's education are an extremely important and exciting time, and we are eager to become a significant part of your child's early development.

The Montessori First Steps Group is a year-long programme, where we create continuity and develop opportunities for the benefit of young toddlers as they prepare to move into the Foundation Programme in the following September.

As we start the new year, we would like to invite you to get involved in IMS in order to make your child's experience at IMS the best it can be.

What follows are a few tips to help your child's introduction to the Montessori learning environment. Please read these documents carefully, and you may find the attachments helpful to post in a convenient point for you and other family members to reference in the coming months as we work together to help you and your child settle in!

We would also like to welcome you to familiarise yourself with our website, [www.ims.edu.hk](http://www.ims.edu.hk), where we update upcoming and past events, and summarise Montessori First Steps Groups activities.

**We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, we are here to help!**

## NOTES FOR STARTING IN MONTESSORI FIRST STEPS

**The Montessori First Steps Groups Calendar:** Please note that the Montessori First Steps Groups follow the IMS Montessori First Steps Groups calendar which is posted in the Engage Parent Portal.

**Drop-Off:** Please note the Campus Specific Logistics for the safe drop-off of child and parent/caregiver which are attached. **Cars must NOT be parked / waiting outside school. Parents using the services of a driver are asked to review these drop-off rules carefully with your driver.**

**Pick-up and Drop-off Times:** Please arrive at Montessori First Steps Groups no earlier than 5 minutes prior to the start of your Montessori First Steps session to minimise traffic flow through Montessori First Steps Groups during the day. This will allow your child a calm and peaceful start to the Group time. **It is important that the arrival time be carefully observed.** Late arrivals can be disruptive and potentially embarrassing to the child, and diminish important social rituals of greetings of teachers and friends. Please also have your child leave First Steps Groups promptly after dismissal.

Your child will be encouraged to put his or her bag into their cubby hole and change shoes by themselves and guided by the adult. This is an important step towards independence. Please encourage your child to do this at home too. This may take up to 10 minutes at first, but children master this over time.

**Caregiver:** The accompanying Parent/Caregiver learns with their child and gains an understanding of their needs and how to create and support developmentally appropriate environments for children at this age. Our programme focuses on how to observe the child and how to offer appropriate activities that follow the child's interests. At home, there are many things you can do to support a consistent experience.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

The Montessori First Steps Groups are designed to meet the needs of the child who is 1-2 years old. The environment has been carefully prepared to suit the child. S/he is now in what Dr. Maria Montessori called the “unconscious Absorbent Mind” phase of development at this age. This means that your toddler is picking up all of the information from the surrounding environment, however, is not yet fully aware of “self” as distinguished from “others” or from the “environment,” and may not be fully conscious of permanence. In order to support your child, we ensure that the Montessori environment and the teachers both meet the needs of the child at this developmental stage:

- The environment is alive with a buzz of purposeful activity.
- The emphasis is on assisting the child in gaining control of their bodies and language skills through concentrated time in the age-appropriate prepared Montessori environment.
- Activities introduced are short one-step or two-step tasks which are within the capability of the toddler.
- Teachers observe and guide parents and children to new activities.
- Montessori First Steps children work with a lot of hands on activities and real life activities, as this is a primary source of language and fits their sensorial and practical life learning mode.
- Food preparation at home with your toddler is also encouraged as a way for them to participate in meaningful activities at home.
- With current COVID protocols, children do not eat snack in the First Steps environment, but are invited to bring in a personal water bottle. We will provide further details on snack, if protocols are adjusted in the future.

## SUPPORTING THE CHILD IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND AT HOME

It is our goal to establish a warm, loving and supportive community in which your child can grow and thrive.

**IMS teachers and staff** are here to help provide a very gentle transition for your children - and for you. There are many firsts in the Montessori First Steps Groups, and we are here to support you and your child as the year progresses. If you would like to speak with your teacher or to the Campus Head, please let us know. We are each available by email, which is confirmed at Orientation.

**Parent Orientation:** This very important orientation is held at school for parents and caregivers only. Orientation will be given by your child’s Montessori First Steps Groups teachers and the Campus Curriculum Leader. They will review the environment layout, discuss some Montessori philosophy, and discuss how to support your child’s development at home. We will also review Programme and logistics, discuss the Montessori First Steps environment, and provide you with an opportunity for you to get to know your child’s teachers better.

### Learning More about Montessori:

- **Montessori in the Home Seminar:** We organise seminars for all parents and caregivers to help you better support the children’s development, and to understand how to create the Montessori environment at home.
- **Montessori in the Home Handout:** In the meantime, we have attached a few suggestions for bringing the Montessori environment and philosophy to your home at the end of this package for your reference.

- **Montessori Evenings:** We encourage you to attend any informational sessions offered – while the topics may be about the Foundation Programme or the Casa Programme, Montessori First Steps parents are more than welcome to come and learn more about the Montessori philosophy, and/or about IMS. These events are marked on the Montessori First Steps Groups Calendar.
- **Books and Videos:** there are many wonderful resources readily available in the IMS libraries for checkout by parents, or available on Kindle. YouTube has a plethora of videos about every aspect of Montessori. We will be sharing a variety of resources with you over the coming throughout the year.
- **Parenting Webinars and Workshops:** IMS, regularly conducts online and in-person parenting workshops on a variety of topics of interest to parents of young children. Please watch our Facebook page and website for more information about upcoming workshops.

**We attach a separate Appendix for easy posting on “Montessori in the Home”.**

## KEY AREAS OF ATTENTION FOR THE VERY YOUNG CHILD

Over the coming months, we will send out additional information as your very young child develops and matures and these become more relevant. As Separation Anxiety is the first hurdle your young child – and you - will face in the first weeks of the Montessori First Steps Groups, we would like to offer some suggestions here.

**New Environment:** If this is your child’s first playgroup experience, they may experience some trepidation. Different children will react in different ways, and feelings of shyness or anxiety are normal and natural. Some children will cry or cling the first day, and stop quickly. Others will happily start the Programme and then later begin to show signs of anxiety when the excitement of “school” wears off. The expression of these feelings is often hardest on the parents! You can help in the process of settling in by expressing confidence and excitement about your child entering the First Steps environment – this is a new environment for you too!

Be sure to talk to your child about the experience in a positive manner. Create a consistent routine, which is accompanied by a big, confident smile from you. If you are worried, your child will pick up on your anxiety. If you are at ease, your child is more likely to be so too.

We encourage you to go to the library and find books about starting school for the first time, designed for the very young child. Reading about being sad, and working through these very real emotions will help your child learn to understand and appropriately respond to emotions.

If any issues arise, be sure to contact your child's teacher for support and ideas – we’re here to help make this new step as enjoyable as possible for your child. The more we understand about what your child is feeling, the better we can help.

It is important to understand that even for returning children, the environment will offer new challenges, and may not be comfortable or familiar after the holiday – for a young child, a week long break is a long time, and a child may feel shy or anxious all over again.

**Toilet-Learning:** Children are not expected to be able to use the toilet independently when they enter the Montessori First Steps environment. Over time, after the children are more settled, they are given an opportunity to visit the toilet each day accompanied by a teacher and his/her caregiver. We will give you more information and suggestions regarding toileting and approaches to support this effort at home as this becomes relevant for your child. Children are not required to use the toilet independently prior to being given a Foundation place offer.

**Learning Control of Movement:** Control of movement is one of the key areas of development for the very young child, and this includes learning both fine and gross muscle control. Mastering new skills is tiring and sometimes frustrating!

**Learning to Communicate using Words:** The child's communication is now emerging from physical communication (such as gesturing) and simple verbal communication of need (such as crying) to more sophisticated speech using syllables, words and short phrases. Children at this age associate the language spoken with the speaker. It is very important to speak to your child in one language consistently, and not mix different languages in one sentence, as this makes the classification of the word into the correct language more difficult. While this is the time to learn languages for the typical child, exposure to multiple languages, especially in the family setting, may result in a delay in verbal expression for a child against standard benchmarks for sentence length at a certain age. In Hong Kong, often the child is exposed to multiple languages at home, and at IMS we have a dual-language environment.

## COMMUNICATION

If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please contact your child's teacher directly, who will be able to advise you. We will work with you to resolve any situation in a supportive manner. Communication is critical to your child's development, and your child's teachers need to have your support and understanding to best help your child, and vice versa. Please let us know how we can help you understand the purpose of the activities in which your child is participating. The Montessori Curriculum often has an indirect benefit that is not necessarily intuitively obvious to a parent. Our ultimate goal is to help your child "do it by myself!" and to be a confident and happy participant in the Montessori First Steps' small community.

**Engage Parent Portal:** In a subsequent email, you will receive an invitation to our Engage Parent Portal. Please follow the directions in this email and complete your portal registration as soon as possible so that you do not miss any important information. Most of the school's communication comes through this portal. This is also where you will be able to view and update your contact information and view your child's personal and medical details. The portal contains the Parent Handbook and all pertinent policies, procedures, forms and documents. The Parent Portal also hosts a calendar with school, campus, and group events.

**Teacher's email addresses:** During orientation, your child's teachers will provide you with their email addresses, so that you may be in routine contact as needed. Your Montessori First Steps Group teachers will periodically send out Montessori First Steps Groups information by email regarding upcoming events or Programme information.

Campus administration and Curriculum leaders are also easily reached by email. You can call our front desk administrative staff or email them with any questions or urgent issues. Please copy your teachers on any emails you send to the front desk to ensure we are all in the loop with any communication.

**Communication Folders:** Each child has a plastic folder in which all communications and finished work can be placed. Any communication from the teacher will be handed to your child at the end of the Group time, to be passed on to the Caregiver. Please ensure that the Caregiver, if not a parent, passes on any relevant information to the parent. **Please check this folder each day** for notes from your teacher or administration. Please put any communication items for your child's teacher or the administration in this plastic folder, and have the caregiver hand it to the teacher at the beginning of the Group time. In addition, you can contact your teachers by email. **Please call our administrative**

staff with any questions or urgent issues. Please be sure to inform us of any changes to your address or other contact details.

**IMS News:** Throughout the year you receive whole-school and campus level updates on important school and parent events through the Engage Parent Portal. A monthly calendar for your child's group, which lists upcoming events and activities, will also be visible on the Engage Parent Portal. Please keep your email and contact information up to date through the Parent Portal, and **Please check our website, your email, and the Engage Parent Portal regularly.**

**Parent Teacher Conferences:** Each year we hold parent teacher conferences twice each year in order to give you the opportunity to discuss your child's progress. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please do contact your child's teacher, who will be able to advise you. We will work with you to resolve any situation in a supportive manner. Communication is critical to your child's development, and your child's teachers need to have your support and understanding to best help your child, and vice versa.

## PARKING & BUSSING

Parking is **not available** on Campus. Public parking is available nearby as described in the attached Campus Specific Logistics information. Parents using the services of a driver are asked to review these parking rules carefully with your driver.

We regret that bussing is **not available** for the Montessori First Steps Groups.

## DRESS CODE

There is no uniform at the Montessori First Steps level (although some children enjoy wearing an IMS backpack, which can be purchased from Aston Wilson online (payment by credit card) at <https://shop.ims.edu.hk>). Please have your child come in comfortable clothing that they can get messy in. All children **take off their shoes** at IMS, and require a pair of indoor shoes, which are kept at school. Your child's teachers will talk to you in more detail about what types of clothes are suitable to wear in Group time.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

**Medical alerts:** We have asked you to let us know of any medical alerts. Please let us know of any further medical information which may be important in the care of your child.

**Snacks and Food Preparation:** IMS provides snacks (simple biscuits and fruit) and water for the children every day, and much of the practical life exercises include food preparation exercises which the children like to eat as part of their snack, including hard-boiled eggs. We have asked you to let us know of any allergies in the application form. Please let us know of any further allergy information which may be important in the care of your child. *All arrangements above are subject to the development of the COVID19 virus, and all the relevant government legislation and regulations.*

**Illness:** If your child is ill, please do not have him/her attend the Montessori First Steps Groups. If a child has a fever (above 99.5°F/37.5°C), is vomiting or has diarrhoea, has a contagious rash, other infection, or symptoms related to COVID-19 or other communicable diseases, we will ask the caregiver to take your child home. Children should not return to school until at least 24 hours after the symptoms have passed and with a doctor's note of health for symptoms related to COVID-19 (See the Parent Handbook for more details). In the unlikely event of a health emergency, if a parent or legal guardian is not the caregiver present on campus at that time, we will bring your child and caregiver to the nearest hospital, while attempting to contact the parents / legal guardian. Parents are required to inform the school with details of any illness or symptoms that your child is experiencing.

**Please Note:** We will adhere to specific protocols and inform parents as necessary to respond to COVID-19 or any prevalent communicable disease with the guidance of the Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection (CHP) and the Education Bureau (EDB). We will inform you should such protocols be required at the start of the new school year or when the government puts requirements in place.

## SECURITY

**A parent or caregiver must accompany the child at all times during the Montessori First Steps group session.** In Montessori pedagogy, we only introduce a child to a task at which s/he can be successful with work. A toddler is not developmentally able to care for himself/herself in the case of an emergency.

**Travel:** If you plan to travel outside of Hong Kong, please use the **Travel Form** to formally notify the Montessori First Steps Group of the contact details of an appropriate Guardian, and the duration of your trip. The guardian cannot be the family's helper or nanny, and IMS must have a signed Travel form that in the case of an emergency, this Guardian has the right to make decisions regarding your child.

**Fire Drills:** Fire Drills are held regularly in order to familiarise the children and staff with the exit routes, and to ensure maximum safety in the event of an emergency. Caregivers should familiarise themselves with the appropriate exit routes in order to be able to help. Montessori First Steps Parents and Caregivers must participate in the evacuation of the building according to the fire drill procedure.

If you find yourself with time on your hands as you are awaiting your child in the Montessori First Steps Groups, we would love your help in the library!

## PARENT – TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Parents play an important role in supporting IMS and its mission of providing an authentic, dual-language Montessori education. The IMS Parent-Teacher Association was established at IMS' inception to support IMS' special community of teachers, students, and families. The vibrancy and warmth of our parent community are a testament to, and an essential aspect of, the nurturing, child-centred environment that IMS provides for every student.

### PTA Mission

The PTA collaborates closely with parents, teachers and the school management to:

- Provide a forum for parents and teachers to exchange views for the overall benefit of students at IMS
- Promote a sense of community among the teachers, parents, and students
- Enhance the educational environment at IMS
- Encourage parents to actively participate in IMS programs and activities

### Getting Involved

We encourage parents to get involved in making IMS a wonderful environment for your child. There are a myriad of opportunities for parents to contribute. You could join one of the many subcommittees led by the PTA. You could assist students in the school Library, work on the Memory Book, or help organise exciting annual fundraising events such as the School Picnic, Gala Dinner, or International Fair. Ideas for making more of IMS for your child are welcome. Please go to the PTA website <https://www.ims.edu.hk/our-ims-pta/> to learn more and sign up. You are most welcome to put in as much, or as little, time as you have available, whether it is a few hours a year or a few hours a month. Thank you in advance for your support!

The Parent-Teacher Association fee is optional and can be paid at the beginning of the year. This helps fund various projects sponsored by the PTA during the year as well as parent education sessions. All PTA funds are controlled independently by the IMS PTA.

The PTA hosts three evening PTA meetings during the course of the school year, and all parents are welcome to join. These are listed on the School Calendar.

Teachers are scheduled to help you learn more about the Montessori Method and other topics of interest to families as per the school calendar. This is a great place to meet other families, support the teachers & staff, and learn what you can do to make this an ever greater community.

If you would like to volunteer, please sign up through our website <https://www.ims.edu.hk/our-ims-pta/> or contact the PTA directly – [pta@ims.edu.hk](mailto:pta@ims.edu.hk).

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**Transition to the Foundation:** The Montessori First Steps Group is designed to be a year-long programme to challenge each child and build a strong first step of independence, self-confidence and age-appropriate ability and skills in preparation for the challenge of the Foundation environment.

At the same time, the Montessori First Steps Groups offer both IMS and each family the opportunity to determine how the Montessori approach fits your family and your child.

Children in the Montessori First Steps Groups have priority for a place in the Foundation. As each child in the Montessori First Steps Group settles and begins to normalise, s/he is evaluated by Foundation teachers or a Curriculum Leader within the familiar Montessori First Steps environment, to determine their readiness to transition.

In very unusual cases with older toddlers, as the child approaches the age of 2, and shows socio-emotional readiness, and a place becomes available, a child may be assessed for early admission to Foundation mid-year. Similarly, some younger children who are not quite ready for a September transition may be offered re-enrolment in the Montessori First Steps Group for the following September.

IMS Foundation places are quite limited, and offers are therefore made based on in-Group assessments and teacher recommendation, in combination with each family's commitment to IMS as their School of choice. We will discuss Foundation placement with parents as the time for transition approaches.

Parents may accept a place offer in the Foundation by purchasing either a Personal Nomination Right or a Personal Debenture. If parents would like more information regarding this process, please contact us.

We are all looking forward to working with you in pursuit of a well-rounded education for your child. After your child has settled in, we encourage you to participate in the life of the school, by volunteering to help in the library or with PTA activities. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact us.

We would also like to welcome you to familiarise yourself with our website, [www.ims.edu.hk](http://www.ims.edu.hk), where we update upcoming and past events, and summarise school activities each month. You are encouraged to get involved!

**We look forward to getting to know you and your family better this year. Welcome to the Montessori First Steps Groups!**

*Your Montessori First Steps Faculty Team*

## SUPPORTING MONTESSORI AT HOME

**Montessori at Home:** Many parents ask us how they can make their home “more Montessori”. We have some resources published on the website regarding this question. We also give Parent/Caregiver Seminars regarding Montessori in the Home each year.

Since you are your child's first and most important teacher, you might be wondering about the kinds of activities you could be doing at home to help your child get off to a great start in the Montessori environment. This information has been prepared as a source of suggestions and ideas, which we will be working on at Montessori First Steps Groups as well. Make your time exploring these activities fun and engaging. We also highly recommend you purchase a copy of The Joyful Child: Birth to Three, which contains a wonderful narrative written by Susan Stephenson, who is an AMI trained 0-3 teacher (available on Kindle). There are also many ideas of things to do in the home to encourage your baby and toddler’s development in these critical years.

Happy learning!

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that education begins at birth and that the first few years of life are the most important, both physically and mentally. Here are some general suggestions and guidelines which we follow at school, which you can also try at home:

- Give your child as much time as he/she needs to discover, as well as to complete a task.
- Be a keen observer - take the time to stand back and observe your child as s/he grows and changes. Note what s/he can do today that s/he couldn’t yesterday!
- Dr. Montessori urges adults not to be the child’s servant: let your child do the work. We know you can do it, let the child do it. Give your child real opportunities to choose work that can contribute in the home.
- Post a sign in your kitchen to remind you and caregivers to “Help me to do it myself!”
- Give your child the opportunity to do the tasks that interest him/her.
- Smile and make positive eye contact with your child often as you explore the world together.
- Speak slowly, clearly and quietly with your child.
- Celebrate the toddler’s love of ‘big’ words by using the full proper names for things.
- If you have more than one language in your home, mother should use her native language and father should use his. Children at this age associate the language with the speaker, so try not to mix languages with a child, especially in one sentence. Obviously, your family needs a common language to communicate with each other, try to make a conscious switch to make the new language obvious to the child.
- Read, read, read in your native language! Enjoy a reading ritual with your child from birth. Children at this stage of development are learning about the world as it is. And so, books with photographs, realistic illustrations and stories based on real life activities are best. Books with elements of fantasy and anthropomorphisation are best left to children of 6 years of age and older.
- Remember that language is not only talking. Touch and facial expressions are also important ways of communicating with children.
- In the Montessori approach, setting up the activity and putting it away is as important as the activity itself. You can model this pattern at home.
- For the optimum quality time with your toddler, try switching off your mobile for a time.

## ONE-YEAR-OLDS

One-year olds are playful, affectionate, funny, and curious, are great observers and also are full of energy. They love to help and love to imitate adults around them.

Dr. Maria Montessori called the developmental stage of the very young child the “unconscious Absorbent Mind”. What this means to the adult is that the toddler is a little sponge, picking up all of the information from the surrounding environment, which makes modeling of good behavior extremely important. At the same time, the child is not yet fully aware of self as distinguished from others or from the environment, and may not be fully conscious of permanence. How you support your child at home needs to be based on this awareness. For instance, a Toddler cannot be expected to finish a complex task and may get distracted and leave that activity in favour of the new one that has caught the child’s eye: the original task is no longer perceived to be “theirs.” Parents and caregivers can help guide the child by setting up shorter one-step or two-step activities which can be completed independently and within a short time. If your child does get distracted, try finishing up by asking him/her to “help me clear this up before we try that.” This awareness of self usually develops in the child as they approach the age of three.

The child is beginning to gain more control of his/her body, and knows and understands more than they are able to say. Language and communication is becoming important to them, and their vocabulary grows from words to sentences. They love to be able to communicate what they want and need, and can get very frustrated when words fail them. This may result in reverting to physical gesturing, or crying. Sometimes it can be so frustrating the child will throw a tantrum. This can be also a very difficult time for them; they can be trying, stubborn, strong-willed and very uncooperative. Reason and logic have no place in a two-year-old’s thinking. So some moments can be difficult and exhausting.

During this year there are a lot of changes for a two year old: they move into their own bed, they stop using nappies/diapers, they learn to play more independently, and attempt to try new things on their own. “I can do it myself,” they say over and over again.

Two year olds are busy. They enjoy sorting, sequencing and learning shapes and colours. Imitation of adults or older children is a major part of their everyday play. They like to dress up, play house or shops. Some two-year olds are more physically active than others. Some will stay with an activity for quite a while, but others will need to move on to do something new. Be patient and attentive to your child’s needs. Two year olds are just beginning to follow directions.

## SOCIAL SKILLS

1. Give your child as much positive feedback as possible – when they are doing something right, try to notice out loud. A child responds to feedback, so if you want them to do something, give them lots of positive attention when they do. A child who is constantly criticised soon loses interest in attempting new things. When a young child constantly handles and touches everything in sight, he/she is not being naughty, they are being curious and this is an important way that they learn.
2. Remember a young child learns much from imitating adults and other children. In this way they learn both good and bad habits.
3. When greeting or speaking to your child, make eye contact.
4. Practice turn-taking while playing games.
5. Help your child learn to initiate a conversation. For example “May I play with you?” “Shall we share the blocks?” “Would you like a turn?”
6. Role-play peaceful solutions to conflicts that could arise. Examples: talking it over, sharing, taking turns.
7. Make sure your child has contact with other children his/her age.

8. Encourage and practice cleaning up after play. Let your child tidy up his/her toys. Turn it into a game, instead of it being a chore.

## INDEPENDENCE

From an early age children want to be independent but we are too eager to do things for them. If you take the time to teach your child to do things for himself, the rewards will be great for both of you. The words you should hear with joy are **“LET ME DO IT MYSELF!”**, and **“I CAN DO IT!”**

It is important to give your child a chance to be self-reliant and to do it with patience and understanding. If one morning your child shows a particular interest in buttoning his/her own sweater, this is your perfect opportunity to take the time to show them how it is done.

Remind yourself to **NEVER DO FOR YOUR CHILD WHAT HE/SHE IS CAPABLE OF DOING FOR HIM/HERSELF**. By the time your child is 3 s/he should take great pride in doing things for themselves. A child of this age is perfectly capable of dressing him/herself, picking up his/her toys, making his/her own bed (you can tidy it later when the child cannot see) and helping with simple chores around the house.

Your child must be taught independence and parents and other caregivers must resist the temptation to always “help”. Please discourage your child from becoming dependent on you. Anxiety in children is linked to dependence.

1. Be sure your child has some time to play or work without the intervention of an adult.
2. Allow your child to feed independently so he/she can perfect the ability to feed themselves. Show him/her how to use a spoon, fork, knife etc. The child may make a mess but this is an important step in his/her development at this time. Too much correction will discourage your child’s effort. Also, holding a spoon develops the small hand muscles your child will use later on in writing. Make meals and packed lunches look interesting and remember to provide child-size portions.
3. Help your child learn to dress him/herself. Purchase items which can be easily mastered by little fingers. Encourage him/her to try
  - putting on a jacket or coat, or a sweater
  - taking off and putting on their own socks
  - fastening boots or shoes (Velcro, not laces)
  - zipping jackets
  - zipping and unzipping a backpack
4. Independent toileting: Please help your child to become independent with all of the steps involved in toileting. Help them to learn how to pull their pants down, how to sit on the toilet, how to clean themselves, how to flush, dress themselves again and how to wash and dry their hands. This procedure is very important for your child’s independence.
5. Young children love to imitate adults, and think flower arranging, making beds and cleaning things is fun! Allow them to help with simple chores such as, putting groceries away, folding towels or laundry, washing the fruit and setting the table at mealtimes. These are just to name a few. There are endless, exciting jobs for your young child to do in the kitchen and around the house.

## ATTENDING SKILLS, LISTENING SKILLS AND FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

1. Listen to tapes and CD's of children's music, and sing along. For the Toddler, who is learning discrimination of sound, try to avoid background music while you are having language-rich reading or family time.
2. Help your child follow simple two-step directions. Example: Go to your room and get your pyjamas.
3. Limit iPad, TV, DVD and video game time. Studies show that passive language learning is not an effective way to learn.

## SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

1. Encourage communication at an age-appropriate level.
2. Talk about everyday experiences. Describe the process of what you are doing with your very young child as you are doing each step.
3. Use descriptive words. Example: "This pear is juicy." "Find your purple shirt with the white stripes."
4. Help your child learn his/her full name

## MOTOR SKILLS: FINE AND GROSS

All of the following activities will help your child develop muscle control, give them a sense of enjoyment and achievement. Successfully completing a task builds independence, self-confidence and willingness to take risks.

### **Fine Motor:**

1. Use a variety of art materials. Example: chalk, scissors, play dough, paints, etc.
2. Do puzzles.
3. String beads on laces.
4. Practice using a glue stick

### **Gross Motor:**

1. Running, jumping, hopping or balancing on one foot
2. Allow your child to walk up and down stairs
3. Practice going up and down a slide safely.
4. Practice throwing and kicking a ball.
5. There are endless activities you can do with a child!
  - Hula Hoop Hopscotch
  - Obstacle course
  - Jogging, skipping, hopping etc.
  - Using a bicycle
  - Scarf Games
  - Dressing up
  - Mime games
  - Dancing
  - Treasure box

- Playdough
- Pasta Jewellery
- Cutting out things: Making a mobile
- Painting, glueing, and using crayons
- Dot Dot Dot
- Cooking

Cooking Take a trip to the supermarket to begin your cooking, buy the ingredients together and imagine how delicious they will be. It is fun to find the butter, the flour, the eggs etc. Try to use child-sized rolling pins and equipment. They like to explore the taste, the texture, and the smell of the ingredients. Tasting along the way is part of the fun. Just remember to avoid tasting anything with raw egg in it. It's helpful to pre-measure ingredients and set them up on a small table in the order of use so that they are ready to use and more easily handled independently by small hands.

In summary, the natural progression for a child is always towards independence. As parents and educators, we are called to support this growth toward independence, so that our children develop a strong sense of self and make full use of all of the unique gifts and abilities that they possess.

# FORMS AND DOCUMENTS TO BE RETURNED TO IMS

Please ensure that the following documents and forms are completed and returned to IMS either via online form or in hard copy. Please complete and send the forms before **Thursday 29 September 2022**.

- **IMS Parental Authorisation Form:** Please complete this **online form** as a consent for your child to participate in school activities and on various privacy aspects, including sharing of your child's pictures/videos in internal communication or external media, and releasing parents' contacts to the PTA and other members of your class, etc.
- **IMS Student Medical & Dietary Restriction Form:** Please complete this **online form** and upload a copy of your child's Vaccination Records.

Other actions to be taken:

- **Materials:** Please have your child bring a child sized bag to the Montessori First Steps Group each day, in which your child can carry the following items. **All items should be labelled with permanent marker or a permanent stick on label with your child's name:**
  - Extra pull up and wet wipes
  - Indoor shoes
  - Change of clothes