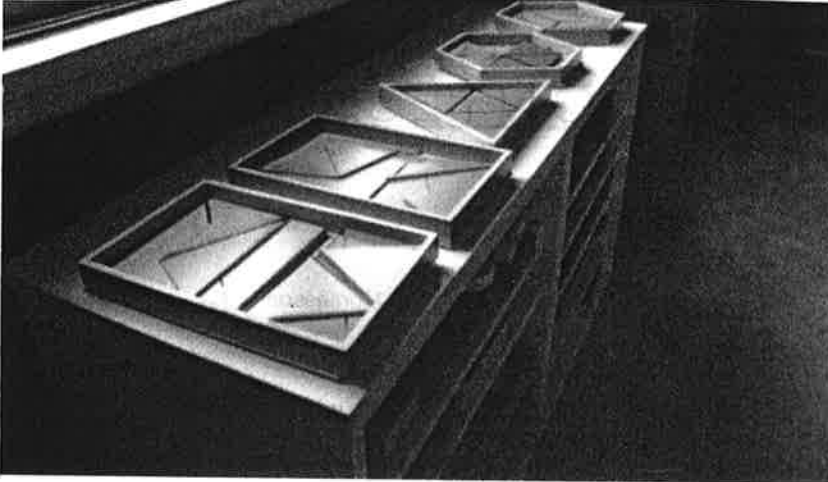


# Montessori Material: Constructive Triangles

I had heard about the constructive triangles before but it wasn't until I got my hands on them last summer in my Montessori teacher training that I really even knew what they were or how to use them. Like most things I've experienced in my Montessori journey, this material is simply brilliant.



The material consists of five different boxes with a number of colored triangles inside, some with black edges on one or more sides. The whole purpose of them is to allow the child to make the discovery that various types of triangles can be combined to form new shapes such as parallelograms (of a variety of proportions), rhombi, rectangles, trapezoids, squares, other types of triangles, and even hexagons. The children also learn that nearly any shape can be broken down into triangles. They explore symmetry, exhibit problem solving and visual discrimination, develop concentration as well as their mathematical mind.

Surprisingly, this is not a math material. Later, in elementary, the children will explore the explicit aspects of these triangular relationships. But for now it is an exploration with the senses - the visual sense in particular.

For this reason, we do not use much language at all. We do not explain, "see how these two triangles make a parallelogram?" The child has the language from his previous (and concurrent) work with the geometric cabinet. We allow him to make his own connections, calling attention to the new shapes formed only subtly and nearly silently. "See?"

Read more about the presentations with the constructive triangles on [InfoMontessori.com](http://www.infomontessori.com).

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Friday, August 28, 2009

## An Introduction to the Montessori Preschool Classroom for New Montessori Parents



You have resigned not to cry. After all, preschool is going to be fun for your child. There are nice teachers and lots of children to play with. There is a playground with a sandbox, tricycles, and a garden to rake. There will be story time, singing, painting, and all those wonderful Montessori Practical Life materials on the shelf that you saw on your visit to the classroom. You just know it's going to be wonderful, but the hardest part is going to be leaving your little one at the door of his or her new Montessori classroom on that first day.

To help you prepare for what to expect from your child's Montessori classroom experience, here is a short primer on what she may be talking about when she comes home.

### An Introduction to the Montessori Preschool Classroom for New Montessori Parents

- **Circle time** - These are daily gatherings of the whole Montessori class and occur at the beginning and end of the day as well as at transition times. Circle may include: calendar, singing, stories, science experiments, group lessons, problem solving.
- **Lessons/Activities** - This is direct instruction by a teacher. Lessons (also referred to as activities) are usually presented one-on-one or in a small group. After a lesson is presented, your child may work on that activity any time it is available.
- **Work** - A child's work refers to a learning activity or set of

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Montessori materials. It includes direct and indirect aims, control of error, points of interest, and extensions. Work in the preschool classroom mostly consists of one- or two-person activities.

- **Mats** – All work in the Montessori classroom, except written work, is done on mats. The mat clearly delineates the student's personal work space. Don't be surprised if your child comes home asking for a mat to work on!
- **Aprons** – Students in the Montessori classroom are required to wear an apron for work involving water or art.
- **Snack** – It is not unusual for snack to be a child's favorite activity! Snack in the Montessori classroom is treated as a work. Your child will have a lesson on snack preparation. Afterward, he will be able to prepare and serve himself a snack during the day. Snack is kept simple and is not meant to replace a healthy meal.
- **Quiet or "Inside" voice** – Children often need a lesson on finding and using their quiet voice in the classroom. This ensures a respectful working environment for everyone.
- **Practical Life** – Practical Life activities are the traditional works of the family and home. They allow children to gain independence and self-discipline, develop gross and fine motor skills, build concentration, as well as indirectly prepare for math and writing. Maria Montessori observed that children prefer real work over imaginary work and real, child-sized tools are used.
- **Sensorial** – Sensorial work covers every quality that can be perceived by the senses. The purpose and aim of Sensorial work is for the child to acquire clear, conscious, information and to be able to then make classifications in the environment. The Sensorial and Practical Life work is unique to the Montessori classroom.
- **Grace and Courtesy** – Preschool children are in a sensitive period for learning good manners and becoming aware of being part of a community. Common courtesies such as saying please and thank you, greeting visitors, serving food, holding the door open and pushing in chairs are presented as lessons to the children.
- **The Peace Table or Peace Place** – Dr. Montessori recognized children as the redeeming factor in the evolution of humankind. The Peace Table (or Place) is a designated place where children can go to peacefully resolve conflict and work out their differences.

Your child's enthusiasm for her Montessori classroom may become contagious. For further reading on the Montessori preschool environment you may wish to try:

- *A Parents' Guide to the Montessori Classroom*, by Aline D. Wolf
- *Child of the World: Michael Olaf's Essential Montessori for Ages 3-12+*, by The Michael Olaf Company
- *How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way*, by Tim Seldin
- *The Montessori Way*, by Tim Seldin



As much as possible, NAMC's web blog reflects the Montessori curriculum as provided in its teacher training programs. We realize and respect that Montessori schools are unique and may vary their schedules and offerings in accordance with the needs of their individual communities. We hope that our readers will find our articles useful and inspiring as a contribution to the global Montessori community.

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We appreciate feedback and love to discuss with our readers further.



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