

SEQUENCING

Sequencing is an integral part of ordering in the Montessori environment. Most of the guidelines below refer to the positioning of activities on the practical life shelves. It is important to understand that these guidelines relate eventually to the whole environment, not just practical life.

Guidelines for Sequencing

1. Materials are always presented from left to right and from top to bottom.
2. Begin with what is simple and move on to the complex.
3. Begin with short exercises and move on to longer exercises.
4. Begin with large motor activities and move to fine motor activities.
5. Start with the known and go on to the unknown.
6. Start with the concrete and move to the abstract.
7. Dry pouring before wet pouring.
8. Use the hand as a tool before introducing tools.
9. Sort a few objects before sorting many objects.
10. Pour into one container before pouring into many containers.
11. Pour large materials before pouring small materials.
12. Master gross movements before refined movements.
13. Squeezing - start with two hands and move to fingertips.
14. Twisting - whole body to whole arm to wrist to fingers to fingertips.
15. When placing objects on the practical life shelf - start on the top left with the simplest and move to the bottom right with the most complex. Each shelf should go from left to right with the easiest exercise on the left end and the most difficult on the right end. This is true for all areas of the Montessori environment.

DEALING WITH POWER STRUGGLES

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Ways to Avoid Power Struggles

1. Avoid saying the word 'no' unless it is absolutely necessary. *contingencies, not orders*
2. Give choices. "Would you like to put the basket of pegs or the board back first"
3. Avoid investment in being the boss or in control. Overly authoritarian teachers can create rebellious students.
4. Be consistent and firm, letting the child know you are serious.
5. Give the child plenty of opportunities to display his/her power appropriately and feel responsible and respected.
6. Invest in encouragement. Help the child to feel good about him/herself.
7. Take care of attention getting behavior before it becomes a power issue.
8. Be aware that when you have the attitude he/she "has to learn" you are too invested and can create a power struggle. Let the child learn from mistakes and consequences.

Before Entering a Power Struggle Understand the Following:

1. If you participate you may lose your effectiveness in influencing the child and maintaining a positive rapport between the two of you.
2. When you overpower the child, you are teaching that the way to be important is to be the stronger person.
3. When you enter the power struggle you take the responsibility for controlling his/her behavior away from the child. The child may decide that what happens in his/her life is not his/her choice, but rather is determined by an authority figure.
4. If you must enter the power struggle, pick an issue you can win.
5. In most power struggles, once you join the battle, the child has won. The child's goal was to get you angry and involved in the conflict.
6. Do not interfere in a power struggle between another adult and a child unless the adult asks for help or the situation is harmful for the child.

When Faced with a Power Struggle

1. Withdraw or sidestep and cool down. Then try some of the steps below:
 - Shut your mouth and act kindly and firmly. You could also tell the child what he/she should do in a friendly, encouraging way and walk away.
 - Decide what you will do and not what you will make the child do.
 - Follow-up at a time when both parties are calm with a logical consequence or contingency.
 - Do not allow the child to infringe on your rights or the rights of the community.
 - Do not withdraw your love. *or approval - they'll push harder*
 - Use friendly eye contact.
 - Don't give in, but don't fight.
2. Give choices.
3. Divert the child's attention. Help the child become engaged in a constructive activity.
4. Do the unexpected or opposite of what the child thinks you will do.
5. Use humor.

*don't interfere too much
walk away, don't engage*