

# *A Montessori Approach to Language*

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and  
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# A Montessori Approach to Language

*What you need to know*

See [A Montessori Approach to Language video.](#)

## *What we will cover...*

- ★ The scope and sequence for Montessori language materials
- ★ Why the materials are presented in a specific order
- ★ An overview of the different materials
- ★ How to teach your child at home without buying all the specialized equipment

## Quick Intro - We come from 2 very different backgrounds...



Jo Ebisujima: I was where you are 10 years ago.

I was desperate to learn more about Montessori, I had limited time and funds, lived in a tiny apartment in Japan (so limited space, too) and we had no Montessori school nearby. I was on my own but knew deep in my heart that Montessori was right for my family.



Deb Chitwood: Bachelor's Concentration in Montessori Elementary and Early Childhood Education with Masters Degree in Early Childhood Studies. Certified as a Montessori Teacher and in Montessori-Based Religious Education Programs.

I taught in Montessori schools before opening my own Montessori school in 1980 and then homeschooled my own children (now successful B.A. graduates) through high school.

## *Follow The Child - Sensitive Periods*

What are sensitive periods?

Sensitive periods are transient periods when your child is motivated to participate in an activity with a spontaneous desire to master a skill or concept

When your child is engaged in such an activity, he or she will show deep concentration.

Young children are often drawn to activities that meet their developmental needs.

Although there are rough guidelines to which sensitive periods happen at which age, every child is different and may not “follow the schedule.”

## *Language Sensitive Periods*

Dr. Montessori identified six specific phases that a child goes through in his or her early development. For language these are:

- ★ From birth to 6 years: language with a sensitivity to vocal sounds
- ★ From 1½ - 3 years: there's often a "language explosion"
- ★ From 2½ - 3 years: receptivity to proper terminology
- ★ From 3 - 6 years: insatiable need to learn new words, including scientific terms
- ★ From 3½ - 4½ years: writing
- ★ From 4½ - 5½ years: reading

## *Why Are Sensitive Periods Important?*

- ★ The child is naturally drawn to an activity that will help him or her develop the skill needed at the time.
- ★ As a parent, we can prepare the environment accordingly, giving the child what he or she needs for each stage.
- ★ It is easier for a child to learn a specific skill when he or she is experiencing a sensitive period, making for more effective and efficient learning.
- ★ Adults have no direct influence on sensitive periods; therefore we must prepare the environment to help the child.

# *Scope and Sequence for Language*

**Scope and Sequence from Montessori Print Shop (AMI) - used with permission. For more details, visit [Montessori Print Shop's overview](#).**

## **Preliminary Language**

- ★ Enrichment of Vocabulary
- ★ Language Training
- ★ Sound Games

## **Introduction to Writing**

Sandpaper Letters

Moveable Alphabet

The Metal Insets - 10 Presentations

Handwriting

# *Scope and Sequence for Language*

## **Introduction to Reading**

- ★ Phonetic Object Box
- ★ Phonetic Reading Cards
- ★ Phonogram Box
- ★ Phonogram Booklets
- ★ Phonogram Cards
- ★ Puzzle Words
- ★ Reading Classification
  - Objects in the Environment
  - Writing
  - Matching Cards and Labels
  - 5-Part Definition Sets

## *Scope and Sequence for Language*

- Word Study
  - Singular - Plural
  - Masculine - Feminine
  - Compound Words
  - Word Families
  - Antonyms
  - Homonyms
  - Synonyms
  - Comparatives - Superlatives
  - Opposites

## *Scope and Sequence for Language*

### **Function of Words**

- ★ Article
- ★ Adjective
- ★ Logical Adjective Game
- ★ Detective Adjective Game
- ★ Conjunction
- ★ Preposition
- ★ Verb
- ★ Adverb Game
- ★ Logical Adverb Game
- ★ Continuation of Commands

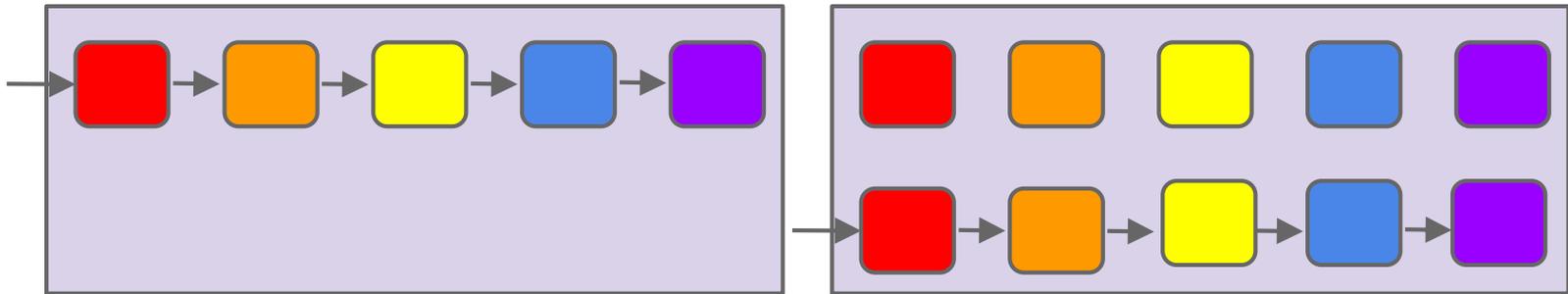
### **Reading Analysis**

- ★ Simple Sentences - Stage 1
- ★ Simple Sentences - Stage 2
- ★ First Analysis Chart
- ★ Second Analysis Chart
- ★ Simple Sentences with Extensions
- ★ Simple Sentences with Extensions, Attributes and Appositions
- ★ Interpretive Reading
- ★ Punctuation

## Pre - Reading and Writing Skills

There are a lot of things you can do to help prepare your child for reading and writing before he or she is ready to actually start. These activities help hardwire the brain so when your child does start to read and write, the process comes easily.

- ★ Always present activities from left to right, top to bottom (unless you are teaching in a language that is read right to left, such as Hebrew)



## Pre - Reading and Writing Skills



Anything that helps the child strengthen the pincer muscles (the muscles used to hold a pencil) is great.

- ★ Knobbed puzzles
- ★ Using pincers, tweezers and chopsticks
- ★ Posting things through small holes, such as straws through a hole
- ★ Anything that involves picking up small objects\*
- ★ Many practical life activities (buttoning, etc.) work these muscles, too.

\*small objects should only be given to children who are past the mouthing stage

## *Pre - Reading and Writing Skills*

- ★ Read to your child from as early as possible. There is a lot of modern day research that shows this is great for babies. Even if they don't understand the words, they are learning about tone, intonation, rhythm and everything else that makes up our language .
- ★ If your child is sitting with you when you are reading, you can use your finger to scan the words, another way to reinforce the left-to-right rule.
- ★ Recite poems and rhymes.
- ★ Use name labels around the home so children start to associate the word (even if they can't read it) with the object. Toys and clothes with picture and name labels are a great idea.
- ★ Mystery bag

## *Only Using Lowercase Letters*

- ★ Around 97% of written English uses lowercase letters, so it makes sense for us as teachers to concentrate on the lowercase when we are helping our kids learn to read and write.
- ★ From years of ESL teaching experience, I never taught uppercase yet by the end of the year all the kids knew it! (Jo)
- ★ Be aware when buying supplies that many manufacturers make kids' equipment (fridge magnets, foam letters, wooden blocks, etc.) only in uppercase! Be sure to check before you buy.
- ★ The exception: the child's initial for his or her name should be taught in upper case.

## *Writing before Reading*

- ★ The process of writing is encoding and is much simpler than decoding, which is needed for reading. Writing (encoding) is putting together sounds that are known. Reading (decoding) requires the child to take apart to understand the meaning of someone else's thoughts.
- ★ To write, a child simply needs to turn sounds into letters. To read, a child needs to take apart the letters, turn them into phonetic sounds, and put them back together to make a word. Children can often write stories using the moveable alphabet before they can read.
- ★ Children who are comfortable with writing will often have an explosion into reading. They understand concretely what it means to put letters together to make words.

# Writing Skills



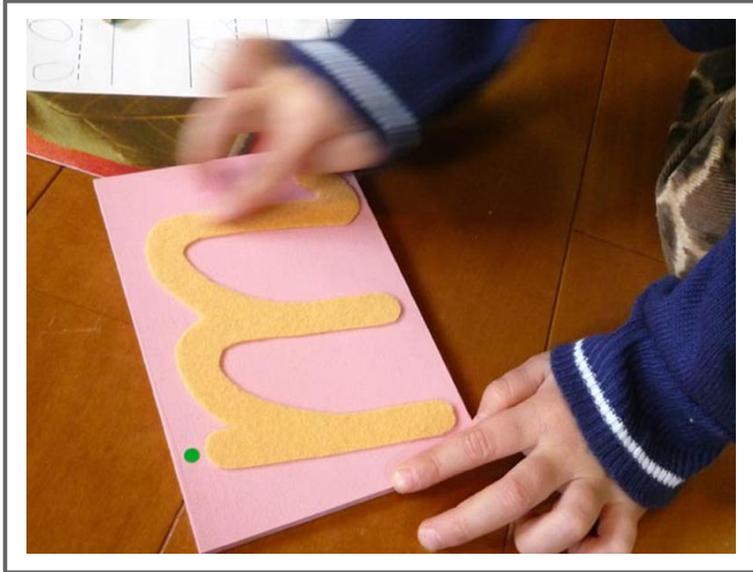
## Metal Insets

- Teach the child how to hold a pencil properly
- Teach the child how to sit correctly when writing
- Encourage the child to hold the pencil lightly
- Strengthen the pincer muscles
- Develop muscle memory for the different ways the wrist moves through writing

# Writing Skills

## Sandpaper Letters

- Help the child identify the phonetic sound in graphic form
- Teach the child the correct writing direction of the letters
- Help develop the muscular memory of each letter



## Writing Skills



### Salt Tray - Sandpaper Letters Extension

- Sand, flour, cornmeal, or anything along those lines can be used
- Small tray with a layer of salt
- Child traces the sandpaper letter first, then traces the shape in the salt tray using the index finger (or index and middle finger) on his/her dominant hand
- Similar exercise is tracing on each other's back or in the condensation on a window or mirror

## Writing Skills

### Knock Knock Game



Knock on the sandpaper letter like it's a door. Then turn it over and sound out the letter.

# Writing Skills

## Play a Variety of Games



- Use writing and reading as you play a game
- Fish for letters or words using paperclips on cards and a magnetic rod
- Make your own game boards
- Indoor bowling: read or write to win the point after knocking down the pin
- Memory
- Fly swatter games (swat the letter sounds)
- Outdoors: Jump or spray water on letter sounds

## Writing Skills



### Placing Letters on the Line

Used so the child can see the correct placement of the letters on the line.

Use a control-of-error chart so the child can self correct.

The child can then copy the words onto his or her own lined paper.

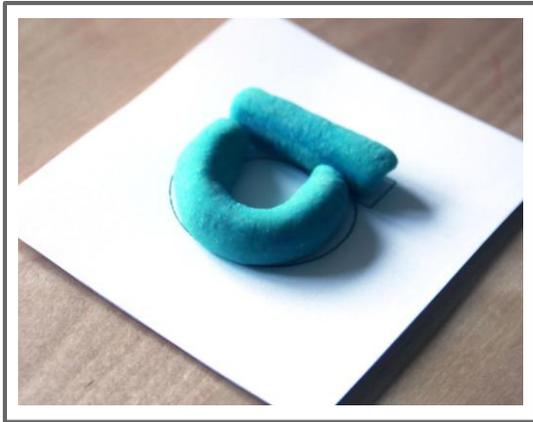
## Writing Skills



### Printing and Sound Booklets

- To develop the child's writing skills
- When first starting, it's important to check that the child is forming the letters correctly. It is possible if mistakes are not caught at this stage that the child will develop incorrect writing habits that are hard to break.
- Have a variety of books made up for the child to use at any time.
- Some children like to make their own books.

# Writing Skills



## Playdough Letters

- Print letters out onto paper (laminates if you think they will get a lot of use or put into a plastic sleeve).
- The child should sound out and trace the shape of the letter (as they do with the sandpaper letters).
- Make “sausages” or “snakes” with the playdough and shape to match the letters.

# Writing Skills



## Studying Themes

- Rather than using drill books, Montessori incorporates language skills in as many areas as possible.
- Using a theme of interest for the child, he/she can label diagrams, write about the topic, learn poems, read books, and gather information.

## *Correcting Mistakes*

A common question parents ask is how to go about correcting a child's errors.

In a Montessori setting we don't correct the child's work. Instead we take a note of recurring mistakes and then give the child a lesson focusing on that point.

## *Introducing Phonics*

- ★ Phonics uses the sounds the letters make.
- ★ A child needs to be sound conscious before he or she can learn to read or write. He or she needs to be aware that words are made up of different sounds.
- ★ Letter sounds are taught in an order that allows the child to use the letters to read and write words as soon as possible.

## Introducing Phonics

Before you start teaching your child, you need to be sure you know the phonetic sound for each letter...

**a** as in ant

b as in bat

c as in can

d as in dog

**e** as in egg

f as in fox

g as in gum

h as in hat

**i** as in igloo

j as in jet

k as in kite

l as in leg

m as in man

n as in net

**o** as in octopus

p as in pig

q as in queen

r as in rat

s as in snake

t as in tap

**u** as in umbrella

v as in violin

w as in window

x as in box

y as in yellow

z as in zoo

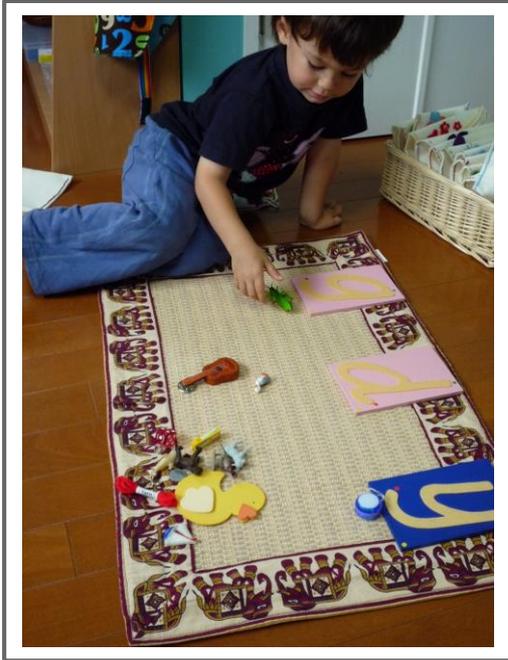
# Phonics



## Sound Pouches -

- Each pouch should contain 4 or 5 objects starting with the same letter.
- Children are drawn to the small objects. They can be small items from around the home, such as doll house pieces, key fobs, magnets, and/or small toys.

## Phonics



### Sound Pouches

Start by sounding out the names of each object.

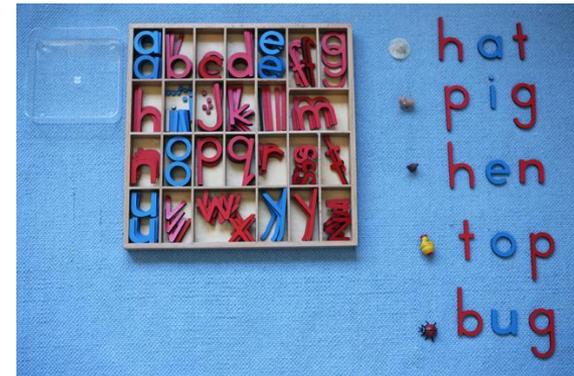
Once the child has gotten the hang of it, he or she can sort the objects from 3 pouches.

Later the child can use the objects for story writing, etc.

## Phonics

### Moveable Alphabet

- One of the best materials for helping children write before reading
- Helps children connect the sound of the letter with its form using physical manipulation

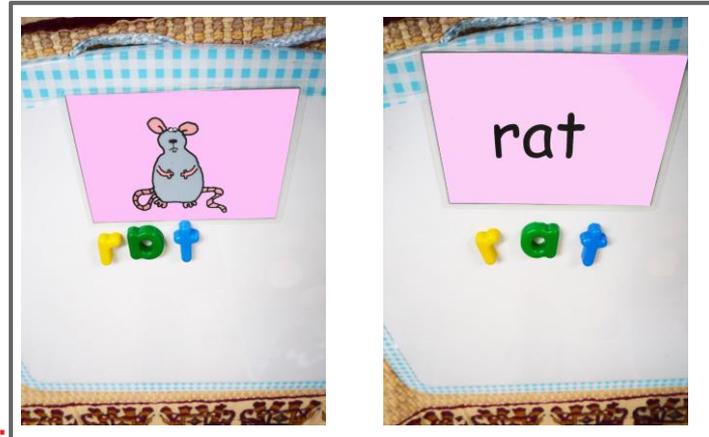


## Phonics

Children use the same progression for each classification of words: short vowel sounds, consonant blends, phonograms, and long vowel digraphs:

- ★ miniature objects
- ★ picture cards
- ★ word labels
- ★ word booklets
- ★ word lists

## Phonics - Use Pink, Blue, Green Material or Dwyer Method



Pink Materials (3-letter phonetic words)  
Blue Materials (4+ letter phonetic words)  
Green Materials (phonogram words)

# Reading

## 3-Part Cards



- Initially the child will match the pictures.
- Non-readers can match the words. They are following the shape of the word, not the individual letters.
- Emergent readers will match the initial letters and will often only look at the initial letter.
- The last stage is for the child to read the word and find the matching word.

# Phonics

## Phonics Alphabet Book

- The child sticks pictures with the same initial sound onto one side of the book and then practices writing the letter on the other side.



## Puzzle Words (Sight Words)

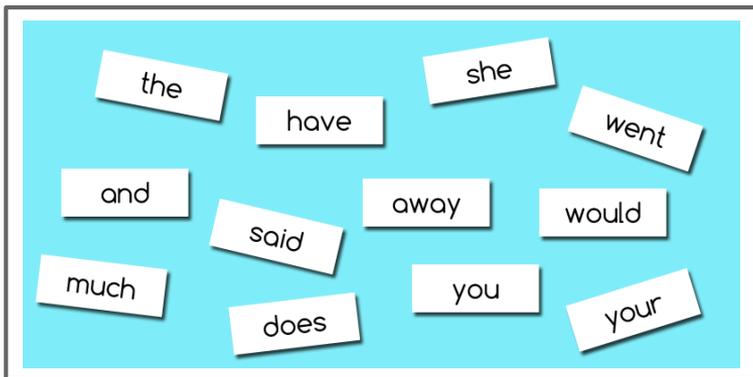
### What Are Sight Words?

The most frequently used repeated words in English are known as sight words.

There are 100 recognized sight words.

Learning sight words is critical to reading because many of them are not phonetic, making it difficult for children to decode the words.

When a child has mastered the sight words, he/she can read half the text, leaving him/her to focus on the more difficult words.



# Sight Words

## Playing Games

- A great way to help children learn sight words is by playing games.
- Memory, Bingo, Snap... you can adapt any game that your child is familiar with and use with sight words.
- Make it fun!



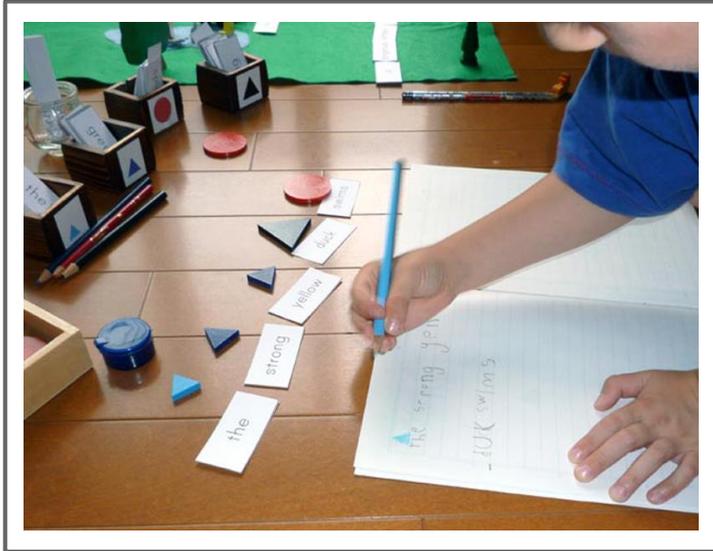
# Creative Writing

## Writing Stories

- Writing short stories is a great way for your child to learn how to express him- or herself.
- Introduce new vocabulary and ask the child to use the words in a story.
- Use a photo as a prompt for story writing.
- Write the piece as if it is a newspaper report.
- Write about an event as a letter to send to a friend or relative.



## The Next Stages...



### The Grammar Farm

- Typically the grammar farm gets introduced to the child around the age of 5.
- Each part of speech has its own unique symbol, and the child learns how to put a sentence together using the symbols.
- As the child gets older, typically in the 6-12 age range, the grammar symbols are used to explain more complicated grammatical sentences .

## *A Bit about Montessori Crash Course:*

### Who is this for?

- Primarily parents who want to use Montessori at home but are feeling overwhelmed, lost or frustrated and need guidance and support to get them going
- Can be used for parents wanting to homeschool who are new to the Montessori method
- Can be used by parents who have kids in Montessori school and they want to support them at home
- Can also be used by parents who want to afterschool their kids or by anyone who wants to have a Montessori home environment
- NOT a Montessori teacher qualification

To learn more, go to

[www.crashcourse27.com](http://www.crashcourse27.com)



# A Montessori Approach to Language - Resources

From [LivingMontessoriNow.com](http://LivingMontessoriNow.com):

[Encourage Your Child's Sensitive Periods](#)

[Montessori Language Activities](#)

[Using the Montessori 3-Period Lesson to Teach Vocabulary to a Toddler](#)

[How to Teach Concepts and Vocabulary to Your Preschooler Using the Three-Period Lesson](#)

[DIY Geometric Shapes](#) (includes DIY metal insets and presentations)

[In What Order Should You Introduce Letters to Your Preschooler?](#)

[How to Teach Phonics with Montessori Letter Work](#)

[Teach Letter Sounds to Your Child Using Montessori Principles](#)

[Reinforcing Letter Sounds with Phonics Songs](#)

[Phonics: How to Introduce Words Starting with Phonograms](#)

[Inexpensive and DIY Sandpaper Letters](#) (includes templates and presentation ideas)

[DIY Alphabet Box](#)

[Inexpensive and DIY Movable Alphabets](#) (includes presentation ideas)

[Using Language Objects to Make Your Own Phonics Activities](#)

[Montessori-Inspired Grammar Activities and Resources](#)

[Montessori-Inspired Spanish Activities](#)

[Montessori Resources](#)

# A Montessori Approach to Language - Resources

From [jojobi.com](http://jojobi.com):

[How To Help My Child To learn To Read](#) (podcast)

[How To Help Your Kids Fall In Love With Story Telling](#)

[How To Pick A Book At The Right Reading Level](#)

[How To Introduce English Grammar With The Grammar Farm](#)

[How To Present Sandpaper Letters](#)

[Can You Mix Dr Who With Dr Montessori?](#) (encouraging kids into creative writing using their current passions; a creative writing kit is included)

[Tutorial to make fun creative writing sheets for your kids](#)

[How To Encourage A Child To Write](#)

[How Marbles Can Help Your Child To Write](#)

[50 Easy Fine Motor Skills Activities To Do At Home](#) (to work the pincer muscles)

[How To Make Sandpaper Letters](#) (using felt!)

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