

PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

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PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

Maria Montessori created a place for children to move freely and look around. Her concept is that the environment can be designed to facilitate maximum independent learning and exploration by the child. The prepared environment is a powerful tool prepared by adults to receive the child, the purpose of the prepared environment is to aid the child in his development. When the environment is prepared the child feels more confident and learns to help himself and become independent.

Our world itself is a prepared environment, the world was created in six days and only on the seventh day man was created. Evolution, the universe was already a prepared environment for us humans to live

Preparation means simply planning everything in prior, keeping everything ready accordingly, and keeping in mind the people who are involved. It's not about expensive things; it's about understanding the needs of the people who are involved.

Sometimes out of love, we prepare an environment very carefully to safe guard the child; we do this out of ignorance. It is an enabling environment which makes him independent.

As educators/adults we must help him realize his capabilities and reveal his true nature.

Though they are very capable, they can't tell us what they need, that is a little obstacle we need to deal with. Children are creators, they are the seed and we must help them become a tree, by providing the kind of environment they need.

It is our responsibility to lead the children to self realization, the task of the child is to become the environment.

WHY IS PREPARED ENVIRONMENT IMPORTANT?

The birds, animals also prepare the environment for their young ones, so imagine how important it is for children, and we are like gardeners, we shouldn't worry about the growth, we must just keep the environment prepared. Our work becomes easy when the

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environment is ready, we need to be passive observers for active children and step in to help only when needed, and we must make sure no obstacles are there, we must always provide useful help and useful love.

Once their needs are satisfied, we can see joy on the child's face and the needs of the child is answered and ergo it's a happy child.

Everything is work for children, not play, the work towards their self construction, as surprising as it may sound, children don't need rewards, and they just do their work and try to achieve perfection. This helps them build emotional intelligence and it makes the child independent at all levels which is the ultimate AIM.

In a prepared environment, we see a different child who is independent and knows his surrounding well; it creates wonders in a child's life, its helps their spiritual growth.

The prepared environment is a peaceful place, the foundation of the prepared environment is from 0-6, it is in this time we can see the beauty of the growth, the Montessori classroom is a MINI COMMUNITY where the children learn and grow.

HOME

At home children are always with family, they are in a secure and nurturing space.

We must make sure that they have enough space to move about and an exposure to rich language, we must make them an active part of our life and social norms

From the day the child is born, he needs a clean floor, the baby doesn't need cradles to be caged up in, and the child should be put on the floor on a soft mat, to exercise their muscles.

The child should be surrounded by beautiful, enriched rich language, and the child needs to see order in the environment; they are attracted towards order, because they will orient with the environment and it gives the child security. Order is a creation of internal order, so external things won't bother them.

The baby needs a lot of space to crawl, move and some toys as motivation for them to move.

Even a small change in the environment will disrupt their order.

While the adults are eating we must make the child sit with us and let him observe how we eat, that way he will also try to eat on his own, and it's important that he listens to our conversations and that truly makes him happy, knowing that he is included, this way his psychological hunger is satisfied as well, when we let children do things on their own, we put our trust in them and that is very reassuring for the child.

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The most important thing is we need to be calm around and with the child.

We must make sure that everything in the home environment is at the child's level, we should give those plates, spoon, chair, floor bed etc all at their level so that they can access it. We should show them love through food, by letting them explore and eating on their own, we shouldn't distract feed them and must respect their boundaries if they say no.

We should prepare our home to suit the needs of the child, giving them freedom is our responsibility; it's not about perfection, but repetitiveness.

Children love purposeful activity, we can include them in our daily chores, we can buy them small brooms and dustpans and show them how to sweep, we can tie cloth ropes to their level so they can dry the clothes, we can give them small cans to water the plants, we need to trust the abilities of the child. We need to give them ample opportunities to prepare for their future.

CASA-HOUSE OF CHILDREN

CASA is a place where the child lives, not where he comes to learn, this is a primary environment, a bridge between home and the world. There should be a smooth transition in the classroom, the child's needs and other needs are to be met. It is a mixed community and they stay and live together. We don't segregate people based on capability and character. Without mixed community we won't be able to teach moral values. In the casa the older child teaches life lessons to the younger one and they help each other in their activities.

In the Montessori environment, everything has its own place and everything is in order, and this is a part of the Montessori classroom. They build emotion with the older one.

The adult should always greet the child with a smile, especially at the entrance, and talk to them so that it helps in social interaction and development of language.

The child takes his time to be a part of the prepared environment. In the casa the child should have a separate place to keep his bag, slippers and his other belongings. It is our duty as an adult trainer to form the simplicity and beauty of children.

They need sturdy furniture, chowki, mats beautifully rolled and kept, not too many paintings, beautifully decorated walls, different varieties of art etc. we need to point out to them and talk to the children about it and it should be at the eye level of the child. There is no need to change it often and when we do we must do it in the child's presence.

It's really important to have a clean environment, and it should be well ventilated with good lighting, so that it will be easy for the children to involve themselves in the work without any hindrance.

The children should learn how to put away their things and clean their environment after they are done.

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We must include fragile objects, and it calls for graceful movement.

The place needs to be not too big, not too small; it just needs to be apt for the child to move about.

MATERIALS

The children learn a lot and are being prepared for life; they learn to wait for their turn and know that everyone needs to get their chance, and that the materials in the casa is for everyone. It's also important to display limited materials, and not overwhelm the children with too many materials.

The materials are grouped into different areas:

1. Practical life
2. Sensorial
3. Language
4. Mathematics
5. Culture

Children require classification.

No subject is taught in isolation; the Montessori curriculum is interdisciplinary and interactive. Each area's materials are arranged invitingly on low, open shelves. Each child may choose his work from the shelves; he may work for as long as the material holds his interest. When the child is finished with the material, he returns it to the shelf from which it came.

Next, a small snack corner should be arranged for the children, with little chairs and tables, and beautifully decorated table cloth, and serving spoons.

A reading corner is important as well, it's good to inculcate the habit of reading from this age because it will help in their language development as well, the reading corner must have books of all ages and proper lighting is mandatory, a little chair can also be kept for the child to sit and read.

It's also important to set up a music corner- we can have variety of music for the children to listen, we need not keep film music, we can keep a nice collection of classical music and some rhymes and songs.

We also need to have an outdoor area for the children to play; it can be like an extension of the classroom, the children can play there, we can have little toys, a swing, and other play

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equipments and lots of natural light, herbal plants, ornamental plants, so children can spot some insects too.

Once they are done playing they can dust the equipments, the child needs opportunity and should be given independence, and the children are well aware of how to use their freedom wisely, other items which can be kept are water dispenser, breakable glasses, a bathroom which is easily accessible to the child.

We need to respect the child by trusting them and reassuring them that they can function on their own.

The trained adult is an integral part of the environment; she/he helps the child bring his potential, the trained adult is the dynamic link between the child and the environment and someone who satisfies the child's needs.

We need to build homes to which our children can adapt easily, and education is an aid to life and the child contributes to the society.

PREPARED ENVIRONMENT ACROSS FOUR PLANES OF DEVELOPMENT

The prepared environment is a principle, not a physical space, it's a spiritual space. It's prepared in order to meet the needs of the people who are involved and using it.

We need to fulfill and support the physical needs of the child.

The mother's womb is a beautiful physical environment. After that the home, and then followed by the school are the environments that nurture the child.

After that the child transitions to the next level that is 6 plus and that's when the child is reborn, in that stage the imagination can't be contained, the space isn't enough so we need to create a new environment according to their needs, they need sensorial exploration and experiences, and they find many manipulative materials.

The things are kept in order and the children will maintain this environment.

When they work as a group, they find a social life, a community, these children take turns and the teachers guide them. In this environment it is not arranged, in sense they will gather things whenever needed. He has to understand the society and we need to teach them real life lessons like going shopping, going to buy grocery and be a part of the community, and the community is aware of the children and it's a safe space to be in, it's a prepared community.

Dual environment is an environment that is both the classroom and community, and understanding of the relationship/ interrelatedness between things is called cosmic education, they need the world in order to understand the world.

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Next we go on to the adolescent stage, this is a very crucial stage and they need guidance and unconditional love regardless of their actions, craziness. They need to come back to reality and doing things in the real world, they grow far away from their family, they are the children of the earth = ERD KINDER. They need to be self sufficient, living together, doing chores on their own, they learn the practical culture.

They learn the arts and literature, going to social gatherings, expressing emotions through art, and they have an emotional connect to the earth. They value stuff because they have made it; they need to be alongside experts, who are emotional links for them, they can be an apprentice, trust, love, admire and learning happens.

They sell whatever they grow, and education is practical and emotionally engaging.

We shouldn't abandon them totally and give them way too much freedom, also not to overprotect them, they are very fragile, and we need to handle them with care.

They live like residents and work like early humans for survival.

Next stage is the university stage; it is a huge change in their life, the world is huge and it allows for learning, and being financially independent, managing stuff on their own, dating, taking responsibilities and they are on the verge of adulthood.

With the support of a good prepared environment the child grows into a self sufficient and independent human.

QUOTE: "A felicitous environment that guides the children and offers them the means to exercise their own faculties permits the teacher to absent herself temporarily. The creation of such an environment is already the realization of great progress."