



## PRACTICAL LIFE SKILLS

**Have you found yourself trying to explain to a friend, or worst-case, a grandmother, why your new Montessori student loves to arrange flowers, wash tables, and polish shoes day after day?**

Practical life, the first area of the Montessori classroom environment, may be hard for an adult to understand. Table washing, polishing, sweeping, and pouring water are important work to the child. They allow her to imitate adults and master the everyday tasks of life. They improve coordination and prepare fine muscles for more complex efforts. They give the child a sense of self-esteem in doing his work, and teach the child that it is possible to take care of herself, without adult assistance, and they allow her to complete complicated tasks by breaking them down into logical steps. Pretty impressive stuff!



No false praise or over-inflated egos come to the child who sees his work has value. The child who masters practical life skills develops a sense of fulfillment and a strong ability to concentrate. These first successes encourage him to take on greater challenges like counting and letter recognition. Remember, these are all jobs the child sees care-givers doing, and children like to do them too. Added bonus: they learn to clean up the spills!