



## **PRACTICAL LIFE**

### **How can parents supplement their children's school experiences?**

Dr. Montessori recognized the parents as the primary teachers in their children's lives and found that children's most formative life experiences take place outside the classroom. With this in mind, we as Montessori parents need to take a look at how we can provide a supportive environment for our children to develop.

There are three areas parents as teachers have to examine: themselves, the child, and the home environment.

Parents must realize they are models for imitation. They must be willing to reorganize themselves and remove those attitudes and actions which stunt the child's growth. Parents should strive to make daily life inviting – a joy to the child.

The parent must know the child. By being familiar with the child's modes of behavior as well as his capabilities, the parent can help the child to assume responsibilities commensurate with this "age", without making unreasonable demands upon the child.

Lastly, the parent must examine the home environment. The home should be set up so as to invite children to develop their own inner resources. It should be a place for learning as well as a place of beauty. Since the composition of each family is unique, so too will be the choices about how to make the home inviting to all the members.

If the home environment is arranged to meet all its members' needs and the children are encouraged to perform any activities of daily life they are capable of, then naturally these activities will supplement the learning done at school. Helping prepare a cake might teach the primary child about counting, adding or shapes, and the elementary child about volume, temperature or the characteristics of liquids – all tangible math and science. Answering a phone can help the primary child with language development and taking a written message reinforces spelling and grammar to the elementary family member. By allowing our children to sweep floors, wash tables, or pick up and sort toys we supplement the practical life and sensorial classroom experiences and at the same time give our children a sense of accomplishment and value to their work.

Parents and teachers are natural coworkers helping to make each event in the day an opportunity for the child to grow and learn in the development of himself.

