

# "I Can Do It Myself"

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"I can do it myself!"

Anyone with a small child in the house has surely heard this statement before.

As parents, we spend those (relatively) quiet moments during infancy waiting excitedly for that coming time when our child, our tiny brilliant bundle of potential, will stand up and exclaim, in a flash of independence...

"I can do it myself!"

We want that for our children, to lay the foundations that will foster that moment, bring it to fruition.

All we have to do is let them do it, themselves.

Here's the trick. Let THEM do it, without interference. The child who, while in the bathtub, pours water from one cup to another, over and over. That child is satisfying an inner drive. They are beginning to absorb the idea of volume and transference while refining fine motor coordination. The child who takes every shoe in the house and meticulously lines them up, heel to toe across the entire kitchen floor, is learning to establish order. The child who gets a cup from the cabinet and a carton of milk from the refrigerator is struggling for self-reliance. We just need to let them, even if the bath water is cooling.

Now, we know that the milk is going to be spilled. Just show them how to clean up afterwards. Or better yet, pick up a small creamer pitcher and keep it in the refrigerator for the child's milk.

It's probably the hardest part of parenting, letting the child learn and explore, touch and do at their own pace. Let's be honest, when you're heading out the front door in the morning, coffee in one hand, it's six-forty five and highway 40 is STILL shut down, that exact moment is when your child decides its time to learn how to button her sweater, your options become limited and "I'll do it for you, just get in the van" usually wins out (That is not an indictment of anyone's parenting skills, that's just the reality of most mornings). It is crucial that the child has opportunities to perform and succeed at these tasks. The best way to help our children is to provide them with an environment in which they can help themselves.

The Montessori Children's House is designed with exactly this goal in mind. Every aspect of a Montessori classroom is carefully prepared to foster independence, gain self-confidence, and develop concentration and a love of learning. This emerging struggle for independence in a child, which typically begins around 3 years of age, is the perfect time for immersion in the three-year Montessori program.

This specially prepared environment creates the "Children's House", a child-scaled space which allows them to build and develop their unique self through the use of specialized hands-on "practical life" lessons. These provide real-world experiences in caring for themselves, others and the classroom environment itself. Each lesson is engineered to focus on a specific difficulty (such as buttoning) without distraction while having an inherent control for error that enables the child to discern if the work has been completed properly or not. A Montessori Directress need never tell a child "that's wrong".

The Montessori environment consists of a mixed age group, 2 ½ to 6 years old. The young ones will learn from observing the older ones who have been a part of the class for some time while the older gain confidence from passing on their knowledge to the younger. This creates a social microcosm in which all of the members develop into solid citizens of their own community.

The confidence and concentration that the child earns is the foundation she will build upon as she moves through the three-year program. Language, beginning with spoken words, develops into reading and writing activities. The hands-on sensorial materials refine the child's senses and prepare the mathematical mind for concrete math materials, which culminate in a keen understanding of mathematical operations.

Yes, they can do it.