



# Beneficial Effects of Practical Life Activities and Normalization

In The Montessori Toddler and Primary Classrooms

An Action Research Report By Leah Linebarger

This action research project investigated the effects of involving children in the practical life curriculum on normalization in the Montessori toddler and primary classrooms.

What material and activities most effectively assisted the child in the process of normalization?

Key Words: *practical life curriculum, Montessori, normalization, self-regulation, deviation*

Normalization is a term used in Montessori with a key component being the ability to self-regulate, calm oneself.

Montessori explained *deviations* as obstacles to optimal development and are times when the child's energy is focused on defending himself and not consciously defiant choices a child makes.

# Methodology

Data was collected in the following ways:

Pre-study enrollment form - goals for child

Pre-study questionnaire - Teachers understanding of normalization, deviations and practices currently used

Daily Record Keeping Log - observational notes

Behavior Log - tracked deviation occurrences and behavior reconciliation

Post-study parent questionnaire - importance of practical life curriculum

# Data Analysis - Parents' Goals for students

## Goals Toddler Students



Social Progress Language Environment Independence Toileting  
Discovery Well Behaved Play Milestones

## Goals Primary Students



Social Progress Intellectual Development Language  
Emotional Exploration Environment  
Keep Busy Reading Activities of Daily Living

# Data Analysis

## Parent post study questionnaire

71% of parents conveyed the importance of developing social skills, independence, effective communication and happiness

Goals for the child align with developmental aims the child meets through engagement in the practical life curriculum

Importance 57% more, 29% As, 14% less

# Data Analysis Toddler Students

Behavior Log - 47 entries, 34 entries correlated with separation from the parents at drop off

The child was noted either being directed to or choosing a second activity 40% of the time

Primary activity the child engaged in 45% of the time was a practical life activity

Observational notes provided information that supported ways in which practical life activities were being used to assist with the normalization process

Signs of normalization noted of children while children engaged in practical life activities were making choices, using yes and no appropriately when offered an activity, smiling, laughing and engaging with others as well as attempting to get other to laugh, mimicking behavior of peers, and a move from working parallel with a peer to interactively working together.

# Data Analysis Primary Students

Behavior Log Class C 34 entries of children engaged in a practical life activity.

32 times the child chose the materials or activity

A second activity was recorded 26% of the time

Observational notes from class C support the data collected on the Behavior Log

Observational notes were compiled from a second primary class, class P.

initially commented on a lack of interest in the practical life activities and materials with the exceptions of food preparation and bead stringing  
children calmed from engaging in practical life activities such as animal care, water transfers with syringes and pitchers, and hand washing

# Additional Research Plans

I feel there is a need for more research on the normalization process specific to children with atypical behaviors so that teachers see it can happen for these children too.

How does birth order affect the child's independence and normalization process?

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