

SUPPORTING THE GROWTH OF INDEPENDENCE

Montessori Children's Foundation Learning Series



1

WHAT IS INDEPENDENCE?

Some independence definitions:



- "Not subject to control by others"
- "Not requiring or relying on others"
- "The state of wanting or being able to do things for yourself and make your own decisions, without help or influence from other people."



2

WHAT IS INDEPENDENCE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN?

- **Doing for themselves by themselves**
- **Doing for their community, by themselves**
- **Making decisions** based on their knowledge
- Using and trusting their **own judgement**



3

INDEPENDENCE NEEDS SUPPORT

- **Skills** may need to be role-modeled or presented as **lessons**
- **Skills** will need to be **practiced** - some abilities do not appear overnight
 - i.e. eating, drinking, toileting, dressing, movement.

4

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE?



5

SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE

- **Help the child** do things for themselves by:
 - **Offering lessons** - we show rather than tell!
 - **By setting up the environment** to support functional independence which is naturally driven by the child.
 - **This environment** includes many **practical life** activities.
- **Don't force** children to do anything
- **Don't correct them** when they make mistakes. We show them the right way when the time's right.
- **Treat children seriously** when they are making decisions. **Respect** their point of view.
- **Refrain from laughing** at children's attempts at independence (patience!)

6

LIMITS

- **Offer choices!** E.g. would you like to brush your teeth now or in one minute.
- **Be Kind and Firm** when offering children choices (usually just two!)
- **Don't ask children if they want to do something** when it is not a choice. E.g. would you like to brush your teeth?

7

MORE ABOUT INDEPENDENCE

- People have a basic need for autonomy
- Children are born with a drive for independence
- Being able to make choices fulfills this need
- Independence allows people to flourish



8

CONCLUSION

Supporting children's **independence** begins at birth.

By **providing opportunities** to be independent we are helping children build **confidence** and a **healthy self esteem**.

Children with healthy self esteem become adults who **believe in themselves** and are **confident in their decisions**.

Children and adults with these attributes will experience **fulfillment**, and will work to make the **world a better place for everyone**.



9



10

TASKS

1. Watch Edison's Day
2. Answer Questions

11
