

Getting to Sharing: The Montessori Method Makes a Difference

From my experiences, the Montessori method works wonders. But this can be a challenge for me because there are times, I find myself reverting back to my traditional ways. The hardest thing for me is to step back and let the children pick what they want to do from a prepared environment.

I was so used to being in charge for so long. Now, I prepare the environment and step back unless there are any behavior situations. One situation I faced was having three siblings in the same class learn to share. Two of the girls always wanted the same item. They often would try to pull an object out of the other's hands and say "this is mine." In the short term, proximity and eye contact worked in most situations. One time, when things became heated, I had to touch the object and give clear directions or provide a distraction.

Each day, we learned through books, videos, and songs that in order to be a good friend, you had to willingly share. This was reinforced through modeling correct behavior and teaching what to say if the siblings wanted the same object. "May I please have that when you are done?" or better yet, "May we play together?"

Finally, one perfect day, the hard work paid off. One student said to the other "let's take turns." The girls began to share more and coming up with their own solutions. The class environment has become more and more normalized with longer periods of concentration.