



A good Montessori toddler classroom looks very different from traditional daycare. While each Montessori toddler room has its own look and feel, a good toddler environment will have five key areas of work—Practical Life, Language, Psychosensory Motor, Self-Expression, and Toileting—and you will see toddlers actively engaged with a variety of activities during their work period.

Classroom area and what to look for	LEMA	Others
Practical life		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Real tools and utensils available (e.g., scissors, knives, glass cups, ceramic dishes, shovel, broom, mop, duster, watering can) and being used by toddlers for purposeful work (e.g., watering plants, sweeping the floor...) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Real, purposeful work (e.g., washing dishes, arranging flowers, preparing food) as against pretend work (e.g., cutting velcroed wooden food, washing plastic fruit) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Materials and activities that are child-sized and arranged in color-matched sets (e.g., a yellow tray, a yellow apron, a yellow cloth, and a yellow sponge) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A varied set of language materials—objects in baskets, cards with photos, objects to match to cards—covering a range of content (e.g., furniture, fruit, animals, vehicles) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A child-accessible library of high-quality, reality-based children’s books 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rich conversations between child and adult where precise language is used 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Psychosensory motor		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Areas for nature exploration: indoors (e.g., pine cones, dried flowers, sticks, insects, rocks) and outdoors (e.g., planters or gardening beds for growing herbs, flowers, vegetables) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activities that challenge children’s motor abilities (e.g., puzzles, beading work, sewing, pasting) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-expression		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sets of musical instruments—e.g., drums, bells, rattles, xylophone 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open-ended activities for the exploration of a variety of art media (e.g., easel painting, collages, gluing, cutting, clay)—as against just crayons and coloring pages 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toileting		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A toileting area with at least two low toilets for a room of 12 toddlers and sink 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A comfortable dressing area where toddlers have access to a seat, clean clothes, and a mirror 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials and activities you will not see in a quality Montessori toddler room		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plastic toys with batteries that make sounds and noise 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pretend play in place of real purposeful work (e.g., pretend cooking in place of cutting fruit for the day’s snack) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plastic cups and dishes and disposable eating material 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>