



**MONTESORI CENTRE INTERNATIONAL**

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**INFANT TODDLER COURSE**

**DISTANCE LEARNING**

**ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS  
AND  
GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS**

including

**MCI Protocol for  
Referencing, Quotations and Bibliography**

**September 2007**

**Appendix 1 (to Student Handbook)**

*Appendix 1*

**INFANT TODDLER COURSE**  
**GUIDELINES FOR ESSAY QUESTIONS**

**Please answer each assignment with ONE essay of approximately 1750 words (with a 10% allowance either way before marks will be deducted). (10 essays in total).**

**GENERAL REMINDERS**

- Plan all your answers carefully.
- Make sure you introduce and conclude your work.
- Try to show evidence of your reading in your work, through the inclusion of quotations and references.
- Ensure quotations are used in an illustrative capacity and not to make statements..
- Cross-reference all quotations.
- Include a bibliography for each assignment.
- Assignments with incorrect bibliography, referencing and/or quotations will be marked down.

*Students are reminded to consult their Study Skills Handbook and the attached MCI Protocol for Referencing, Quotations and Bibliography.*

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**OUTLINE/ DESCRIBE:** requires a report of the major features of an issue.

**ACCOUNT FOR:** Requires more than a description. Give an explanation of the topic. The main concern is to say 'why'.

**ANALYSE:** Requires the breaking down of the topic into its component parts. A detailed exposition is usually needed.

**EXPLORE:** Gives scope for students to be innovative and to approach an issue from a variety of perspectives.

**DISCUSS:** Present and examine clearly several sides of an issue. The discussion may require consideration of a number of views or theories.

**EVALUATE / ASSESS:** Requires the examination of the strengths and weaknesses of a particular approach. A brief description may be necessary, though the descriptive element should occupy a minor part of your essay.

## **ASSIGNMENT TOPICS FOR THE INFANT TODDLER COURSE**

### **Dear Students,**

As you are embarking on the Infant Toddler course, you bring with you knowledge and understanding of the Montessori philosophy, child development and observations which you gained in the Early Childhood Course.

This course will extend your understanding of the younger child and will prepare you for working with this age group.

When studying and preparing for your assignments, please bear in mind that you need to draw on your knowledge of all the three theoretical subjects mentioned above. Where appropriate, you should be making links between Montessori's writing and developmental theories of Bowlby, Piaget, Erikson and Freud. You also need to support your discussion with examples from observations of babies and toddlers. If you do not have access to a child of this age group, we hope you will make a contact with a family, through your doctor, nurse or health clinic and that you will draw on your knowledge of the child when discussing the assignment topics.

To help you with your initial study we have prepared a brief outline of what we would expect in the answers for the first two modules (four assignments). These outlines should help you in planning and researching your essays. We hope this will start off the process of integration of your knowledge and understanding of children.

Please remember that the word limit for each essay is 1,750 words.

With best wishes for your study,  
The MCI Academic Team

## **Module 1b: MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY**

### **Assignment 1**

Answer **ONE** of these questions:

**A. Discuss the importance of movement in the second year of the child's life.**

*When preparing your answer, please consider the following:*

- The home and how it guides the child's sensitive period for movement
- The spiritual embryo and its importance in the first years of life.
- Need for freedom to explore within a safe environment.

OR

**B. The Prepared environment for babies and toddlers has different qualities to the one prepared for the older child. Discuss this statement.**

*When preparing your answer, please consider the following:*

- The qualities of the prepared environment for the baby and for a toddler and how these two compare to the prepared environment of the nursery (3-6 age range).
- Safety versus opportunities to freely explore.
- Opportunities for stimulating activities and importance of rest.
- Importance of available space for exploration.

### **Assignment 2.**

Answer **ONE** of these questions:

**A. Order is an essential quality of the prepared environment. Discuss this statement in relation to the baby's sensitive period for order.**

*When preparing your answer, please consider the following:*

- Sensitive period for order: inner versus outer order
- Routines, predictable care and behaviour, security
- Emotional base

OR

**B. Explain how you would foster the toddler's need for freedom. Illustrate your answer with practical examples and explain why freedom is essential for the development of the individual child.**

*When preparing your answer, please consider the following:*

- Describe your understanding of freedom
- Safe versus nurturing environment
- Role of the adult in facilitating freedom for the child

## **Module 2B: CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

### **Assignment 3.**

Answer **ONE** of these questions:

**A. Discuss the first stage of Erikson's theory of development in relation to the attachment theory of Bowlby.**

*When preparing your answer, please consider the following:*

- Describe Erikson's first stage in detail
- Describe Bowlby's theory in detail, also look at the work of Mary Ainsworth
- Critically evaluate both theories in relation to the needs of the child in the first 18 months of his/her life
- Focus on predictable care
- Use your observations to illustrate your critique

OR

**B. Explain Piaget's sensori-motor stage in detail, explaining the child's schemas and how they are manifested in the child's play.**

*When preparing your answer, please consider the following:*

- Discuss the sensori-motor stage in detail, listing all relevant sub-stages
- Define schemas and explain how they link with assimilation and accommodation
- Give examples of schemas you have observed, explain how you could facilitate them further.

### **Assignment 4.**

**Carry out five observations of the same child under three years of age and evaluate them in detail**

*When preparing your answer:*

- Draw on as many aspects of development as possible and substantiate with developmental theory.

## **Module 5B: CHILD CARE AND HEALTH**

### **Assignment 5.**

Answer **ONE** of these questions

- A. Discuss the benefits of regular routines in the life of a baby and a toddler. In your discussion focus on the importance of the growing independence of the child.**

OR

- B. Discuss the benefits of breastfeeding- ensure that you support your answer by reference to current research.**

OR

- C. Discuss in detail the process and benefits of baby massage.**

## **Module 12: DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Assignment 6.**

Answer **ONE** of these questions:

- A. Select either a treasure basket or heuristic play, describe it in detail and explain how it aids the child's overall development.**

OR

- B. It is possible to introduce toddlers to early practical life and sensorial activities. Select three activities in practical life and sensorial and analyze their benefits to the overall development of the toddler.**

OR

- C. Creativity is an essential quality, which fosters the human spirit. Discuss the statement in relation to a range of creative opportunities for both babies and toddlers.**

## **Module 13: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

### **Assignment 7.**

**Discuss the role of the adult in the child's acquisition of language. Select one language acquisition theory to support your answer.**

## **Module 14: COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Assignment 8.**

**Discuss the importance and methods of effective partnership with parents or caregivers in support of early years care and education for babies and toddlers.**

**Module 15: CHILD AND SOCIETY**

**Assignment 9.**

answer **ONE** of the questions:

- A. Discuss the changing role of the family structure within your culture and its impact on the infant/toddler today.**

OR

- B. Discuss the issues relating to child abuse and how to manage them within early years setting.**

**Module 16: SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

**Assignment 10.**

Answer **ONE** of these questions:

- A. Design a nursery prospectus**

OR

- B. Design a prepared environment for Toddlers and explain the reasons for your design.**



## **Summary of MCI protocol for referencing, quotations and bibliographies** (replacing pages 33-34, 36-38 in Study Skills)

### **Referencing of terminology**

*always cross reference terms (such as hormone, spiritual embryo etc) when first mentioned in an essay and when definitions are given*

#### **example:**

The child's sensitive periods first manifest themselves during the stage of the spiritual embryo (Montessori, 1988a).

### **Referencing to text**

*when paraphrasing text or relating to text read, acknowledge the source*

#### **example using a book:**

Montessori (1988a) believed that all children undergo several embryonic stages; she talks about the physical, spiritual and social embryo.

#### **example using a book with secondary sources:**

The child builds his/her knowledge of the world through the twin processes of assimilation and accommodation (Piaget in Bruce & Meggitt 2002).

### **Quotations**

*when quoting directly from text, use quotation marks and give full reference of the author, year of publication of the book and a page on which the quotation appears*

#### **example of a quotation from a book with one author:**

When describing the first stage of the child's development Montessori explains that "The developing child not only acquires the faculties of man; ..... but, at the same time, he adapts the being he is constructing to the conditions of the world around him." (Montessori, 1988a, p. 56)

#### **example of a quotation from a book with several authors**

"Conservation refers to a person's understanding that superficial changes in the appearance of a quantity do not mean that there has been any fundamental change in that quantity." (Smith et al. 2003, p. 402)

#### **example of a quotation from an edited book with several contributors**

"Very young children should always be encouraged to write freely about anything that interests them." (Lane, in Fontana, 1993, p. 202)

#### **example of a quotation from a magazine article**

"A wide range of tools can be used to enhance the music ..... These props bring the...songs to life." (Newcome & Ross-Masson, May 2004, p. 11)

#### **example of a quotation from a website**

"By freedom, however, Montessori did not suggest that the child should be free to do whatever he chooses." (<http://www.montessori.uk.com/Students/library3a,7.html>)

*No other references are required; do not use footnotes, or list references at the end of the essay*

## **Bibliography**

*Summary of all text consulted in preparation of the essay, some of which may have not been used in quotations or referenced:*

### **Example of a bibliography which uses books, articles and website sources**

Bruce, T. & Meggitt, C. (2002, Third Edition). *Childcare and Education*, Hodder & Staughton, London

Epstein, P. (undated). *Goldilocks and the Sensitive Periods of Maria Montessori*  
<http://www.montessori.org/resources/library/Educational/sensitiveperiod.html>

Feldman, R. (1996). *Understanding Psychology*, McGraw-Hill Inc, New York

Lane, S. “*Learning & Teaching Writing Skills*” in Fontana, D. (1993, Second Edition). *The Education of the Young Child*, Blackwell, Oxford

Little Oxford Dictionary, The (1984). Oxford and Clarendon Press, Oxford

Montessori Centre International (undated). *Mathematics, Module 8*, MCI, London

Montessori, M. (1972). *The Secret of Childhood*, Ballantine, New York

Montessori, M. (1988a). *The Absorbent Mind*, ABC Clio, Oxford

Montessori, M. (1988b). *The Discovery of the Child*, ABC Clio, Oxford

Newcome, Z. & Ross-Masson, C. (May 2004). *Tunes to Tempt Toddler* in Under Fives Magazine, Preschool Learning Alliance, London

Pound, L. (2003). *Supporting Mathematical Development in the Early Years*, Open University Press, Buckingham

Smith, P.K. Cowie, H. Blades, M. (2003, Fourth Edition). *Understanding Children’s Development*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd , Oxford

[www.montessori.uk.com](http://www.montessori.uk.com) Montessori Resource Library, (undated). *Freedom*,  
<http://www.montessori.uk.com/Students/library/3a,7.html>