

PREPARATION FOR READING begins with silence; listening; patterning; sequencing; naming objects; matching objects or cards, classification of objects into groups; matching, naming and labeling various nomenclature and parts of a whole; I Spy (listening and oral skills); Sandpaper Letters; and Moveable Alphabet.

The Silence Game- Age 3+ Recommended reading- *The Secret of Childhood*, p.123-125
Maria Montessori would stand just outside the room or at the back of the room. "From a little distance I began to call them by name in a whisper. Whoever heard his name had to come to me, walking in such a way as to make no sound. They would come up slowly walking on tiptoes, and taking care not to knock against anything that would make them heard.....Thus I came to understand that children are not only sensitive to silence, but also to a voice that calls them almost inaudibly out of that silence."

The children experienced what Dr. Montessori considered to be a spiritual experience for them where they could become aware of a silence within themselves, as well as the joy of hearing one's name called out of that silence.

Variations of the Silence Game:

1) The Silence Game can be played anytime during the work period. Make a sign with the word "Silence" to put up for about one minute. The children can simply become silent while staying at their work rug or table, then resume work and quiet conversation when the sign is taken down. A special bell or singing bowl can also be used to begin and end the game.

2) The Silence Game may be played while sitting on circle. Hold up the silence sign for about one minute. Then, the children can tell what quiet sounds they heard. Or just let them leave circle silently taking the peace with them as they choose their work.

3) The Silence Game may be played outside to become aware of the quiet sounds of nature.

4) Individual Silence Game- Age 3+ Basket containing a one-minute sand timer and a "silence" sign, special silence game rug different than the other work rugs.

Lesson- Place the silence game rug in a quiet place. Carry the basket to the rug. Place the silence sign and the timer on the rug. Turn the timer over. Sit or lie on the stomach and watch the sand until it has all emptied to the bottom. Turn timer again to do 2 minutes or replace in the basket. Model being very quiet near the person playing the silence game.

Listen and Do (Oral commands) Age 2 ½+

To develop listening skills. Materials: none.

Lesson: The teacher gives a simple command such as "Walk to the sink (pause), then say a child's name.) Continue until all have had a turn.