

# Family Connection

MAY 2024

“Imitation is the tool given by nature to children to help them adapt to the particular place where they were born and that enables them to adapt to the customs of their specific environment.”

—Maria Montessori, *The 1946 London Lectures*, p. 147

## The Three-Period Lesson

BY HEATHER WHITE



The three-period lesson is a hallmark of Montessori education that helps children learn new vocabulary and concepts. It is a fundamental tool used daily in Montessori classrooms as a way of presenting new information to children. At its most basic, the three-period lesson is simply a lesson in three parts.

**In simple terms, the three periods, or steps, are:**

**Naming** (Introduction): “This is...”

**Recognizing** (Association/Identification): “Show me...”

**Remembering** (Recall/Cognition): “What is this?”

The three-period lesson was originally developed by Édouard Séguin, a French physician and educator who worked with neurodivergent children. Séguin was a major inspiration to Maria Montessori and the source of many of her ideas.

Montessori classrooms of all levels use the three-period lesson. In a toddler classroom, teachers are likely introducing basic vocabulary including the names of colors and animals. For the early childhood student, the three-period lesson

*Continued on next page*



is utilized to introduce letter sounds and numbers. In elementary, the same overall principles apply with topics including sentence analysis and performing mathematical operations.

### PERIOD 1: Naming (Introduction)

This is the child's first exposure to a new topic. In this period, the name is provided for the item or the concept and the child is allowed the opportunity to explore. For instance, when introducing crayons, one might say, "This is blue," while pointing to the blue crayon. When the child used the blue crayon to color, the adult might again point to the child's drawing and say, "You colored with blue."



### PERIOD 2: Recognizing (Association/Identification)

The "Show me" period is often a separate occasion from the first period lesson. It provides the child the opportunity to explore and learn as much about the new topic as they desire. It lasts as long as is necessary for the child to reach mastery. This is the time when the adult is able to observe the connections the child has made and to review and reinforce concepts.

Hands-on activities and games are introduced during this period to allow practice. Connections between the new concepts and those that have already been mastered is helpful for children during this second period. Through practice, it may become evident that it is necessary to return to the first period to re-introduce concepts.

*Continued on next page*



**Register for our family course!**

## You and Your Child's Montessori Education: Early Childhood

A course designed for families interested in incorporating the Montessori philosophy into their homes.

**LEARN MORE AT:**  
[amshq.org/familycourse](http://amshq.org/familycourse)



**AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY®**  
education that transforms lives



### PERIOD 3: Remembering (Recall/Cognition)

The third period is when the child is asked to name the concept. It is a form of authentic assessment that ensures the child has achieved mastery.

It is important to note that if the child incorrectly identifies a new concept, the adult simply makes a mental note to present that topic again at another time, rather than correcting it at that moment. Instead, focusing on noticings by making a simple statement such as, “You found yellow,” will provide continued opportunities for practice for the child without deterring their motivation for learning.



This fundamental approach empowers children to become self-confident, inspiring competence and independence each time a new skill or idea is mastered, and sparking the child’s thirst for knowledge and their love of learning.

---

## The Power of An Apology: Should You Ask Your Child to Say Sorry?

By Heather White



Saying sorry is one of the earliest phrases parents teach their children. However, research shows that children do not begin to grasp the emotional implications of an apology until around age four because this is when they start to develop the ability to put themselves in someone else’s shoes, to empathize with another. When a child is forced to apologize before this time, they are really only learning how to say the word; they are not necessarily being genuine.

Instead, it is helpful to think about what we want children to think or understand when they apologize. Here are some ways to focus on

*Continued on next page*



encouraging children to empathize with others and to help them begin to understand the value and meaning of saying sorry:

**MODEL**

Apologize to your child when you've hurt them or done something wrong, even if it was accidental.

**OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO REPAIR**

Help the child figure out how to make amends. This might be making a card or doing something helpful or kind, as long as they know why they are doing it.

**SAY SORRY FOR THEM**

When your child has done something that requires an apology, apologize on their behalf. This is a great authentic way of modeling.

**GIVE TIME AND SPACE**

Especially for older children, step back and give them some time to see what they do. With the opportunity, they may apologize on their own.



**MontessoriLife** THE OFFICIAL BLOG AND MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY

Quarterly magazine • New blog articles weekly • In your mailbox and online

[www.MontessoriLife.org](http://www.MontessoriLife.org)