

Introduction to geography- montessori

[Science](#), [Geography](#)



Introduction to Geography The world is getting smaller, we now live in a global village due to our enlarged technical skills. It is today as easy to fly from eg. Dublin to Rome as it was to travel from Dublin to Cork 150 years ago, Not to mention flights to the moon & back. Geography has turned out to be the study of man in space. Between mass media and frequent travel the child is bombarded with impressions about the planet he lives on. In today's world the child hears random words, names of countries with upheavels and wars & they get scared.

They really need to know where they are, even on a larger scale. It is better to understand that a lot of things happen far away and not in my neighbourhood. This will give them some sense of security. Geography is a science of earth and its life- it includes a description of land, water and air. The roots of word geography are greek and it means description of the earth. When we talk about geography with 3-6 years it means planting some seeds of interest and it is not meant that we should teach so why do we have it? A child has his human tendencies for orientation; exploration and order.

We also give child names, which responds to the child's human tendencies for communication and sensitive period for language. However, the other sensitive periods also play a part and to top it all off the child also has an absorbent mind. Geography is presented as an extension of the language programme in our rooms, because it contains aural written & read parts. Maria Montessori called her small geography set-up " an introduction to the world'. It has an holistic approach, starting with the whole and ending in details (start with the globe, then continents...eventually to the place where they live).

The purpose with geography is 2 fold. First you must provide the child with activities, which help him to order impressions and information. Secondly in elementary you must introduce the child to his place in the cosmos(Universe). This will ultimately end in the study of ecology. As in all fields within extended language section the world could be roughly divided into three parts. 1. One dealing with practical life, i. e pouring with land and water forms 2. The sensorial keys- the sandpaper globe and colour globe, continent map, map of Europe, map of Asia, America, Africa Ireland. 3. Language in its various stages i. e names of land and water forms, names of continents and oceans, geography folders-showing pictures from countries and people therein- oral, written and read language. As a practical life exercise the different land and water forms are presented as a pouring exercise. The models are made out of clay and put on small baking trays. The child will get a sensorial impression of what these water/land forms really are. Later the child will have picture cards/classified cards, which will show them the same thing, a lake/an island etc. there are six pairs)and even later they will return as language extensions- first with the pictures only in the pre-reading stage and then with the naming and reading in the classified reading stage and even later in reading practice with the definition stages. The materials are: 1. The globes the child of ? years experiences a peak in his visual sensitivity to form. Globes help him to form his impressions of the world and he can see it. We start out with a small globe with rough and smooth areas. This offers the child and opportunity to a. Grasp roughly what shape his planet is and . Sensorially explore by touching the land and water distribution on the surface of the planet The land is rough and water is

smooth. Phrases like “ as the world turns” will take on a new meaning for the child. This globe is followed by the coloured globe. It is similar in size and shape to the first globe but here the different continents are coloured in various colours- here we give the language of continent & ocean. 2. Puzzle maps The child will get to know their world. The eastern and western hemisphere allows the child to see the whole world at once, but flattened.

The puzzle activity enhances the sensory perception of the continents- initially purely sensorial but when the child himself begins to ask for names they are given by a 3-period lesson. Maps of each continent is then given- they show the political partitions of the continents into countries. We always begin with the child’s own continent and then proceed by following the child, usually doing one hemisphere at a time. To be mentioned is that the knobs of the puzzle maps are placed where one finds the capital of each country- this is an indirect preparation for later work.

The knobs also serve as an indirect preparation for writing, as with the geometrical forms earlier. 3. Naming At the sensorial level names are given after the forms of the puzzles are learned. However it’s not uncommon for the child in Montessori schools to know the names of all the countries and counties of the child’s own country/continent. At a later stage the child can also do a matching activity with flags , and later (at reading stage) maps are provided with the names of the countries and capitals (pin maps).

There should always be a stand with flags from the countries of the children’s own continent. They are there to give the children an idea of nations that stand for units. There are many countries in the world with

many different people, but we're all made from the same material. This is strongly brought forth in the picture folders we've made, which should be part of every Montessori environment. They should be colour coded, following the colours of the colour globe- with three in total for every globe. The first set shows general pictures of the continents

The second set shows people, products, places and plants The third set is more culturally inclined-with architecture, foods, art, and transportation etc. The prepared environment should provide all these things mentioned and also books and stories about people of the world-to help and give the children keys to the world of geography. All the materials should be kept in a special segment of the room, on special shelves-be aware of not overloading. It is important too that the directress should make a good rapport between the child and the material.

This can partly be achieved through practical life activities, which put children into practical contact with children, e. g. how to pour sand and water forms, how to dry, dusting globes, dusting maps, how to carry the globes, how to take out the puzzle maps, how to put it back and how to carry them. Later the child will learn how to put pins into the pin maps and you will show the child how to hold the flag in one's hand and carefully put it in the country where it should be and later introduce the names and main cities.

You should also, in the environment, have a little box with drawers for the child at reading stage. From this they can take out names of continents and countries etc. and label them on the puzzle maps. There should also be a good atlas and if possible a large ordinary globe too. Artwork in geography

could consist of making flags-using the rectangular inset of metal insets as a base for the flag(at this stage the child will be 4 - 4 ? years). The children can also draw outlines of the continents on the paper for the metal insets and colour them in, making a booklet of the continents.