

The One Problem With Raising A Montessori Kid That No One Talks About

By [Gemma Hartley](#) (posted on Romper.com)

When I chose to send my son to a Montessori preschool, I was thrilled when I got the acceptance letter. I loved that the Montessori approach caters to children's own learning styles, allowed them to explore their own interests and work at their individual pace. I also loved the idea that a Montessori education fosters independence. Having kids who will dress and feed themselves instead of whining for snacks and asking me to find and put their shoes on 12 times a day? Yes, please. However, the picture I had in my mind of an "independent Montessori child" and the reality of raising an independent Montessori child were two totally different things. [Raising a Montessori kid is a lot harder than you'd think.](#)

I didn't think I'd have any issue with raising an independent kid. I liked the idea of fostering self-reliance in my kids, allowing them to spread their wings and fly instead of coddling them at every turn. After being raised in a home that decidedly did *not* encourage independence (my mom seriously cut up my brother's food before serving it to him until he left the house when he was 19), I knew I wanted my kids to be totally different. I wanted them to feel confident and ready for the world, and Montessori seemed like an approach that would ensure that.

Before I put my kids in a Montessori preschool, I was imagining things like raising the next *Masterchef Junior* who would cook dinners for the family every night. (If an 8-year-old can make a [croquembouche](#), surely my 6-year-old can master a sheet pan dinner, right?). I imagined waking up to find my kids dressed and ready for school, their chores already done. How smoothly and efficiently my life would run once my kids had mastered their Montessori inspired independence!

Teaching kids to be independent requires a lot of patience, which I definitely do not have.

What I didn't take into account was how much effort it would require to teach independence to my kids. After instilling in my son a love for *MasterChef Junior* in an attempt to eventually get out of dinner duty, I soon found that teaching kids to cook is a slow and arduous process. It also requires a lot of patience, which I definitely do not have. French toast, an evergreen breakfast favorite in our home, takes about 5 minutes for me to make. When my son decided to stretch his Montessori skills and do it "all by himself" (i.e. while I stood guard and watched the frustratingly slow process unfold) it took the whole morning - or at least a solid 30 minutes.

For a control freak like myself, 30 minutes of encouraging my kids and not stepping in to take the reins can be difficult. I know that it's good for my kids to learn to do things on

their own, but must the learning experience move at such a glacial speed? Can't I at least gather the ingredients all at once, or crack the eggs to move things along? Watching a child crack an egg is a cruel and unusual form of torture. So much eggshell. So much egg on the counter. So much hand-washing, which, oh my God, also takes kids for-freaking-ever.

Watching a child crack an egg by themselves is a cruel and unusual form of torture. So much eggshell. So much egg on the counter. So much hand-washing. And all of it takes for-freaking-ever.

It would be one thing if teaching my kids independence was limited to teaching them to cook. But no, in Montessori the whole world is your learning experience. Clothing yourself. Preparing your lunch and other incredibly time-consuming meals. Getting your school bag ready. Doing household chores. Even as I write out these things, they sound so good, but when I bring myself back to the reality of how much time each task takes for an unassisted child, I want to weep.

I hope that someday, all of this hard work will pay off. I still like to imagine a future of gourmet meals prepared by my child, efficient school mornings that require no nagging, and the satisfaction of knowing I am sending capable kids out into the world. And even though my son has been in a Montessori school for only a few years, I am already seeing the benefits. Every morning, he comes out of his room fully dressed and ready to take on the world. No matter how frustrated I might be sometimes, I have to acknowledge that he *is* slowly gaining independence.

Despite my struggle to accept the pace of an independent Montessori child, I know it is good for him to acquire these new skills. So I'll continue to quiet the voice in my head that is constantly screaming *Oh my god, just let me do it!* because watching the accomplished look on my kid's face when he serves us breakfast is so worth the wait.