



WELCOME TO

# *The Montessori School Academy*

**THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL  
MAKEOVER**

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AN ONLINE PROGRAM

Resource Book 2 - The Child

# Notice

THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL ACADEMY

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# The Montessori Child

## ♥ MODULE 3

An overview-This is a brief introduction to understanding the Montessori Child: The Montessori Philosophy of Education is based primarily on the study of the child, how the child learns and interacts with the environment and people. The child is our focal point.

## Worthy of note

### ♥ THERE ARE 4 PLANES OF CHILD

#### DEVELOPMENT IN THE MONTESSORI METHOD

The planes are stages of development in the child from birth to Adulthood.

1. 0-6 years
2. 6-12 years
3. 12-18 years
4. 18 -24 years

We will be working mainly in the 0-6 developmental stages.

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### WHAT IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

#### An Overview

Child Development is the process by which a child will grow and change from birth to Adulthood. It covers the way in which a child gains skills and abilities as a human being.

There is a need for people working with children as well as parents to have a working knowledge of how children develop. This is because such knowledge will give one an informed understanding of why children behave the way they do.

As a Montessori teacher, you must follow the child, you want the child to understand not cram information. It therefore makes sense for you to start your journey with an adequate knowledge of how children learn and develop.



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### ♥ NOTES CONTINUED

In order to measure development, you must look for the skills that the child has acquired. These skills are called milestones and are usually linked to the age of the child. It is very important to note though, that these are generalized, and that each child is unique and has their own personal development rate.

No two children are the same. Children grow at different rates so they also develop at different rates. Having said this it is important to observe the different areas of development in a child so that we can help them along to achieve the best they can in life and if there is an abnormality we should be able to identify this and refer the child for professional help.

A Montessorian must view the total wellbeing of a child and not just academic prowess!

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### ♥ NOTES CONTINUED

#### The Planes of Human Development

Maria Montessori observed that there were 4 planes of development in the life of a man and she believed from what she scientifically observed that the four planes are nature's blueprint to the construction of man.

The 4 stages of development ranged from 0 to 24, each stage has a span of approximately 6 years.

From 0-6, 6-12, 12-18 and 18-24, the first and third planes are very active and growth is intense and the second and last plan are much more steadied growth periods.

In general the beginning period of each plane is very intense and then it tapers out at the end until it picks up again at the beginning of the next plane. It is important to note that Montessori was quick to point out that these age limits

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not cast in stone as each child develops differently so there will be exceptions to the classification and that there were gender differences as well. This classification was therefore a generalization to help educators understand children and not a scientific classification that is always true for all. Let's look at the characteristics of the first 2 planes as they are the age range found in our schools.

Age 0 - 6 - The Early Childhood stage - Infancy  
- The Individual Creation Of The Person

This is the period when the child uses two important gifts to help begin the process of creating the person who will later become the adult. Namely these are: the absorbent mind and the sensitive periods. The child at this point is on the fast lane of development, this is a very active time of absorbing information about the



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environment and adapting to it as the child grows and develops. This all kicks into place from the time of birth, the spiritual embryo has psychic qualities. During the early years one and a half to two plus the child is not interested in sharing, waiting their turn etc., the world revolves around them. The child may even be known to turn their backs while others are playing, some just want to be alone

- This period is characterized by the "Absorbent Mind" in which the child's mind is like a sponge, absorbing all that is in the environment.
- At age 0-3 this is unconscious absorbing - the child is creating himself unconsciously.
- At age 3-6 this is conscious absorbing- the child is consciously working to create himself

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- It is also characterized by the "Sensitive Periods" which include the intense need for:

- ❖ Order and Small Objects
- ❖ Language and Grace and Courtesy
- ❖ Refinement of the senses and tolieting
- ❖ Movement

To name just a few, children are consumed with a deep interest of learning a specific skill, they tend to keep doing it repeatedly untill it is completely mastered.

- Fundamental formation of the character
- Physical independence – This is the period of "I can do it myself!"
- The child wants to be free to work independently within a structured environment doing real activities with an intelligent purpose.

So the child is influenced by the environment, by mum the primary care giver, he learns warmth, emotional security and can then concentrate on

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developing the mind from all the information he has absorbed.

By the time a child is 3-6 years he is ready for work. He wants to create himself through lots and lots of activity.

Movement informs the mind, develops cognitive skills. It is therefore very important to provide a space where children can move.

The hands are now an extension of the brain and is therefore also important in the Montessori setting. This child is now a social being, ready to interact better with others, it is during this time that they will learn to share wait their turn although a lot of individual work is carried out by the child at this point in the Montessori environment because she is working on building herself.

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The child wants to work, so Montessori put all the information together to encourage the teacher to provide a conducive prepared environment for the child so that he can work, develop and grow appropriately. The child can and does use his senses to understand the environment, so the Montessori Method utilizes all the senses as we create activities for the children to do.

Only give each child what he needs not what we think they need. The child with his innate characteristics, the prepared environment, got ready by the observing teacher. Here the three areas of the Montessori triangle work together for the greater good of the child.

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These concepts are what feed the Montessori core subject areas: Practical life activities, sensorial education and Language development activities to enable the child absorb as much information from the environment, use their hands and bodies to explore and become more adept as well as help the brain to develop, picking up new words, expanding vocabulary and use of language so that the child can learn to read and write using all the God given gifts at this time of life as a solid foundation that will enable the child to reach their fullest potential. Cultural Studies and Mathematics help feed into the need for order and a further understanding of the environment, giving the child a lot of practice with classification of all things around them. This why the Montessori Nursery /Early years is structured the way it is.

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#### Second Plane – Age 6 – 12 – Childhood (Construction of The Intelligence)

- This period is characterized by reasoning with imagination and logic. Before this stage in life children find it difficult to actually differentiate reality from fantasy, so we do not encourage fantasy before the age of 6.
- Intense thirst for knowledge which is so great that if allowed to blossom, the child will seek exposure to many things at a level that has been left to high school and college students interests in the past.
- “Cosmic Education” – the child wants to know about the whole world and his place within it. At this point the child can appreciate the interconnection of things and people.



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- This is the “bridge” to abstraction – or the transition from concrete to abstract thinking
- Interested in learning about the universe – they now want to know what is outside of the prepared environment.
- Intellectual independence – This is the period of “I can “think it” myself”.

So as Montessori Practitioners always remember

Nursery School: I can do it myself- the goal is to gain independence as much as possible

Primary School: I can think about things myself- the goal is to figure out why, what, how, when, where and everything in between. It is so important not to give the child all the information, they need to think!

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#### Glossary of Terms

1. Absorbent Mind The mind of a child is compared to a sponge that soaks up everything about the environment.

Unconscious absorbent mind: the child aged 0 to 3 years soaks up everything without even realising he is doing so.

Conscious absorbent mind: the child starts asking questions age 3 to 6 years, wants to understand what they are experiencing.

2. Sensitive Period: a period when the child has an intense need to learn a particular skill, this is the best time for them to work on it and get it. Once they miss it then learning the skill still happens but it takes longer and may become very difficult.

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3. The Psychic Embryo: This is the spiritual being that is developing in the child. At conception there is a physical embryo, at birth there is the psychic embryo. We must be aware of this and help nurture the child to become a well rounded human being.

4. Normalization: This is the state of development reached at usually 6 years where the child has grown and matured and is ready to move into the second plane of development, all that needs to change with temperament and emotions are now well adjusted.

♥ THE END

### Assignment 3

Write a short description of the child 0 to 6 or 6 to 12, and give 3 core areas you would like to include or reform in your school/classroom setting.