

*The 6 - 12 Child-
Characteristics*

ESSORI RY

Montessori Primary 1:2



Addlo Montessori Training Center

The 6 –12 Child

The Characteristics of the Child in the Second Plane of Development

There is a new goal and direction in the development of the 6 to 12 year child, and though you will find that most schools divide the Primary years into two in the Montessori setting, there is no difference in the classrooms. The Lower (6 to 9) and Upper (9 to 12) Primary require the same kind of environment.

Maria Montessori pointed out through her observations a startling difference in the child just around their 6th birthday, there is a shift of focus from developing the individual self to becoming a social being.

This is the period of **the development of the mind, the age of reasoning, the development of the personality, the road to mental and intellectual independence.**

If the cry of the 3 to 6 child was ‘Show me how to do it myself’ and their joyful affirmation at 6 was: ‘I can do it myself’, then the cry of our 6 to 12 year old’s are ‘**Let me think about it myself**’ or ‘**Show me how to think for myself**’ and by the time they are 12 their joyful affirmation is ‘**I can think myself**’.

The job of the 6 to 12 year old is to develop their powers of reasoning. These children are born to be critical thinkers. (We must therefore enable them to use their intellect, stretch it and help it to develop naturally. Telling them what to do every step controlling the child is not going to help them get to where they need to be.)

Remember that we follow the child and give freedom with limits. We respect the child and believe that the inner teacher is guiding them. It is important to understand this new child, so that we can provide the guidance and setting needed for them to develop their intellect and **learn how to think**.

The method of learning has changed it is no longer just concrete based, they will gradually move from concrete to abstract during the second plane of development.

At this stage of development the child has a strong desire for peer groups, friendships are very important, she is no longer so self-absorbed, she wants to collaborate with others and work together with a mate or a group of friends.

This is when their imagination is ignited. They tend to have a great ability to gain and retain information and are interested in the world and all it has to offer. Children in this plane enjoy learning lots of information about history, geography and scientific facts. It is their period of cultural awakening. At this point the child can learn huge amounts of information, she usually wants to learn and understand the whole and love huge projects.

Physically the child is growing very fast. She is much taller and is full of energy. Her bones solidify and get much stronger. Her teeth fall out. The child also lacks an awareness of her body and may bump into things a lot at this stage. It is important to note that her sense of order and neatness fades a little at this stage.

The child begins to develop a sense of what is right and fair at this stage. They have a strong need to be fair and moral justice takes precedence if the right foundations have been laid. She is ready to take on injustice and will discuss her views intelligently.

Games are also important at this stage. The child is very interested in the rules. She will invent new games and come up with the rules of engagement. Logic is setting in. As her moral compass continues to develop, she wants to exercise her mind to determine herself what is right from what is wrong. She wants to make a personal judgement call, so she won't just want you to tell her, she would prefer to be given the space to figure it out.

The child becomes more confident, this is how leaders emerge.

Between the ages of 9 to 12 the child is moving on towards adolescence, and is very independent and more aware of her place in the group. There may be a marked difference between the maturity of the girl child and the boy child. They are more aware of the differences of the sexes and some tend to stay within their own gender group.

The child is more conscious of moral issues to do with self, the community and the world. They are ready to take on the world, if you let them.

Find below the key differences between the First and Second plane child.



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1st Plane Child (0 – 6)

Attached to mother and the family

Thinks adults are always right

Enjoys cuddles and has affection for small things.

Learns individually

Interested in reality the concrete (asks 'what?', even when they ask 'why?', they really mean 'what?')

2nd Plane child (6 -12)

Needs a wider environment so pushes away from the family

Realises that adults are fallible!

Does not like fusses made over them and is very resilient and strong.

Prefers to learn in groups (has the herd instinct) a social learner

Interest is in morality, justice and fairness. (when they ask 'how?' and 'why?')

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Works towards physical independence

Works towards intellectual independence

Has a sense of order

May become untidy and uncaring about physical order

The Child has an absorbent mind

The child has a reasoning mind

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