

The Montessori Teacher

Child Development 1



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Lives



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The Montessori Child

LESSON 1

THE LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To define child development
2. To know the different areas of development
3. To describe the basic milestones of each age group
4. To understand how different factors influence children development
5. To understand the importance of recognizing atypical development

Understanding the Montessori Child

An overview of the Montessori Method - What you need to know and understand about the Montessori

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 the parent and teachers an informed understanding of why children behave the way they do. Remember that as a Montessori teacher, you follow the child, you want the child to understand not cram information. It therefore makes sense for you as a parent or teacher to start your journey with an adequate knowledge of how children develop. In order to measure development, professionals that work with children look for the skills that the child has acquired. These skills are called milestones and are usually linked to their ages.

It is very important to note though, that these are generalized, and that the stages of development we use to measure or determine how a child is developing should be done with the realization that each child is unique and has their own personal development rate. No two children are the same. So please don't compare and contrast and drive yourself crazy or get agitated. 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.

There are several areas of development that should be considered when looking into child development • Physical Development- Not physical growth but the development of skills that the body and its parts attain in order to make complex maneuvers. They include gross and fine motor skills • Sensory Development- This is the development of the senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Children begin their learning journey through the senses • Cognitive Development-The development of the mind. (Intellectual)- The mind is the area of the brain that recognizes reasons, knows and understands things. • Language Development- This is the ability to exchange and share messages and meanings.

All human beings use different mediums (sound, speech or signs) to communicate. Language is structured; communication can be informal or formal. • Emotional Development- This relates the development of feelings, about self and others. It includes the development of a child's self-concept and self-esteem. • Social Development- The growth of relationships with others, the ability to socialize, that is learning the skills and attitudes that enable the child to live and co-habit with other human beings. • Moral and Spiritual Development- This is the development of the child learning right from wrong, ethical behavior and taking responsibility for ones actions.

These areas of development cannot be considered separately, they must be brought together, so that we can understand the child as a whole person. If one area is lacking, it will affect other areas of development in a detrimental way. For example a child who is malnourished cannot develop properly physically and therefore lacks energy to develop fine and gross motor skills. This will in turn affect the child's ability to develop cognitive skills as movement of hand and body enables the child to understand better the environment and makes important connections in the brain. Also a child who does not have sufficient sensory stimulation as a baby and toddler may grow up deficient in social skills and cognitive development.

The lack of development in the physical area e.g. fine and gross motor movement may decrease capability of child developing good cognitive skills. Recent research has shown the importance of movement as it prompts the development of both the body and the brain. Even the use of the hands are so important, it helps to develop the brain. Children who take care of different activities for themselves and the environment, such as sweeping, dusting, washing plates and dressing up, are able to grow in leaps and bounds compared to other children who are always constrained, and have everything done for them.

When deficiencies are identified and interventions done to correct let's say a lack of sensory stimulation, once child has started receiving help and is responding to this in a positive way, it may become obvious that other areas of the development in the child starts changing and developing as a direct result, even if this was not the aim of the intervention.

Children use the muscles around their face and mouth to learn how to speak, by gaining control of the muscles. If the child has a physical impairment around the face and mouth for example this will impact greatly on the ability of the child to actually communicate through

It is therefore important not only to consider the different areas of development but to look at the child as a whole person and see how these different areas affect different aspects of growth in the child. Understanding this issue is a key factor in being able to provide good person centered education needs for children who may be affected negatively in one area or the other. Montessori is child centered so you must develop a good understanding of child development so you understand the age group you are working with.

THE STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Download [Child Development 101](#) next.

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