

# The four planes of development



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“ Development is a series of re-births. There comes a time when one psychic personality ends and another begins”..... “ Our work as adults does not consist teaching, but in helping the infant mind in its work of development” (Dr Montessori, The Absorbent Mind, Chap 3) What did Dr Montessori mean by the four planes of development? Describe each plane of development. Explain how we use this knowledge about the child in the Montessori classroom, with the main focus at the age group of 0-6 years.

#### THE FOUR PLANES OF DEVELOPMENT

The life of the child that will become tomorrow’s adult is basically divided into four planes or stages. Each plane consists of a period of six years. Within these stages the development of the child is quite intense at the beginning, then it consolidates and finally trickles into the next. The first & third planes of development are periods of intense creation, whereas the second & fourth planes of development are the calm periods of consolidation. First plane of development (0-6years) “ Development is a series of re-births.

There comes a time when one psychic personality ends and another begins. The first of these periods goes from birth to six years of age and the child’s mentality basically remains the same. It includes two sub-phases, from birth to three years and three to six years. In the first of these, the child has a type of mind that adults cannot exert upon to influence. In the second sub-phase (3-6years), they are still mentally the same but the child becomes susceptible to adult influence and their personality undergoes great changes. ” (The Absorbent Mind, chapter 3, Pg 17).

The first plane of development (0 – 6 years) is a period of intense creation. This period is of very great fundamental importance for the formation of the  
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child or the foundation of the personality of the child. This is the period of transformation. This plane of development is further divided into two sub-phases, (0 – 3) and (3 – 6) years. The first sub-plane is known as ‘The unconscious absorbent mind’. The infant during this period is also identified as a ‘spiritual embryo’ as the infant has within himself the potentialities which determine his future development.

The child can learn subconsciously, and effortlessly, through observations and explorations. The child is a sensorial explorer at this stage, that is, the child basically learns through his senses. During the absorbent mind stage, the sensitive periods are at their strongest and help the child’s learning process as well as the child’s initial adaptation. During this first plane of development various physical abilities develop in the young child. Physically the body develops from head to toe. Between the age of zero to three years, these abilities develop separately and independently of each other.

Hand and leg movements are not guided by the mind. At this stage, the child needs to create himself. It is a period of rapid development for the child and the child develops physically, mentally, socially as well as emotionally. As his physical body becomes more defined, he learns both consciously and unconsciously as his mind easily absorbs his environment. He becomes more sensitive to things adults take for granted and learning for him is easy and fast. At this stage, he also learns to care for himself, dress himself, feed himself etc.