

# Natural laws of development essay



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Though there has been much development in the pre-natal period, the development of a child during the first 3 years after birth is unequalled in intensity and importance than any period that precedes or follows the rest of the child's life. The natural development of children proceeds through several distinct planes of development, each one having its own unique conditions and sensitive periods for acquiring basic faculties in the developmental process. The first plane (ages 0–6) involves basic personality formation and learning through physical senses. During this plane, children experience sensitive periods for acquiring language, refinement of the senses, movement and order.[29] The second plane of development (6–12) involves learning through abstract reasoning, developing through a sensitivity for imagination and social interaction with others.

The third plane (12–18) is the period of adolescent growth, involving the significant biological changes of puberty, moving towards learning a valuation of the human personality, especially as related to experiences in the surrounding community. The fourth plane (18+), involves a completion of all remaining development in the process of maturing in adult society. • The young child (0–6) has an absorbent mind which naturally incorporates experiences in the environment directly into its whole basic character and personality for life. This mental faculty, which is unique to young children, allows them to learn many concepts in an effortless, spontaneous manner. It also allows them to undergo the key phenomenon of normalization to return to their true natural development. After the age of about six, this absorbent mental faculty disappears.

- Work, not play. Children have an instinctive tendency to develop through spontaneous experiences on the environment, which Dr. Montessori referred to as ‘work’. In this sense, the children’s normal activity is attached to reality in the present moment, rather than idle play through such means as toys and fantasy.[36][37 Practical life materials and exercises respond to the young child’s natural interests to develop physical coordination, care of self and care of the environment. Specific materials provide opportunities for self-help dressing activities, using various devices to practice buttoning, zipping, bow tying, and lacing.

Other practical life materials include pouring, scooping and sorting activities, as well as washing a table and food preparation to develop hand-eye coordination. These activities also provide a useful opportunity for children to concentrate bringing about their normalization. Other practical life activities include lessons in polite manners, such as folding hands, sitting in a chair, walking in line.[39] As the child ages into an elementary program, Practical Life activities take on a practical purpose, such as cooking and vacuuming.

### Sensorial

The sensorial materials provide a range of activities and exercises for children to experience the natural order of the physical environment, including such attributes as size, color, shape and dimension.[40] Many of these materials were originally suggested and developed by Seguin in his prior research with scientific education.[41] Examples of these materials are pink tower (series of ten sequential cubes, varying in volume); knobbed cylinders (wooden blocks with 10 depressions to fit variable sized cylinders);

broad stairs (ten wooden blocks, sequentially varying in two dimensions);  
color tablets (colored objects for matching pairs or grading shapes of color).

[42] The Montessori approach is based upon the natural laws of human development.

Maria Montessori observed that children under six absorb limitlessly and effortlessly from the world around them and in so doing lay down all the foundations for later life – they become adults with all the characteristics and language of the culture into which they have been born simply by living. In this huge task, however, they have some help. They have a special kind of mind that she called an absorbent mind – a strong desire to explore everything around them using their senses and a drive to become independent. She identified certain windows of opportunity for the child that she called ‘sensitive periods’ during which the child is irresistibly drawn to the things he needs to help him develop his full human potential.

“ There is only one problem, and it is human development in its totality; once this is achieved in any unit – child or nation – everything else follows spontaneously and harmoniously Montessori had a revolutionary vision of education based on her study of children. Based on the fact that the emergence of the ‘normalized’ child is natural and universal, Maria Montessori saw the ‘normalization’ of the child as a great hope for a fundamental change in society and for the future of humanity. Her scientific observations of children demonstrated that ‘forced education’ which is based on political ideologies interferes violently with children’s natural developmental growth process.

Montessori thought of childhood as the continuation of the embryonic process occurring after birth. She referred to the child as a ‘ spiritual embryo that develops spontaneously’. Referring to the child’s spiritual ability as the ‘ absorbent mind’. She defined human development as ‘ a continuous process in which the individual remains the same psychosomatic entity while constantly adapting to changes in the environment’. In human development, certain fundamental patterns and sequences of development are hereditary, but individual behaviour is shaped through interaction with the environment i. e. learning through experience or ‘ experiential learning’.

The basis of our approach is the simple observation that children learn most effectively through direct experience and the process of investigation and discovery. In her studies of children’s learning, Dr. Montessori noted that most children do not learn by memorizing what they hear from their teachers or read in a text, but rather from concrete experience and direct interaction with the environment. Asking a child to sit back and watch us perform a process or experiment is like asking a one-year-old not to put everything in his mouth. Children need to manipulate and explore everything that catches their interest. This led Montessori to emphasize the overriding importance of concrete learning apparatus and to the development of the Montessori materials for mathematics, sensory development, language, science, history, and geography.

The Montessori learning materials are not the method itself, but rather tools that we use to stimulate the child into logical thought and discovery. They are provocative and simple, each carefully designed to appeal to children at a given level of development.

Each material isolates and teaches one thing or is used to present one skill at a time as the child is ready. Montessori carefully analyzed the skills and concepts involved in each subject and noted the sequence in which children most easily master them.

To facilitate the prepared order of the environment, the teacher arranges the materials on the shelf following their sequence in the curriculum flowchart. The materials are displayed on low open shelves that are easily accessible to even the youngest children. They are arranged to provide maximum eye contact. Montessori teachers play a very different role from those played by traditionally trained educators. While the stern disciplinarians of the past may be an endangered species, many teachers are focused on maintaining order and on covering a pre-defined curriculum. Most see their role as dispensing facts and skills to complacent students.

The Montessori teacher's role is that of a facilitator and guide. He or she is usually not the center of attention and will not normally spend much time working with the whole class at once. Her role centers around the preparation and organization of appropriate learning materials to meet the needs and interests of each child in the class.

The Montessori teacher has four primary goals: to awaken our children's spirit and imagination, to encourage their normal desire for independence and high sense of self-esteem, to help them develop the kindness and self-discipline that will allow them to become full members of society, and to help them learn how to observe, question, and explore ideas independently. The Montessori teacher is a coach, mentor, and friend.

The teachers rarely present a lesson to more than one or two children at a time and limit them to a quick, efficient presentation. The objective is to intrigue the children so that they will come back on their own to work with the materials. Lessons center around clear and simple information that is necessary for the children to be able to do the work on their own: the name of the material, its place on the shelf, the ground rules for its use, and some of the possibilities inherent within it. The teachers closely monitor their students' progress, keeping the level of challenge high. Because they come to know the children so well, Montessori teachers can often use their own interests to enrich the curriculum and provide alternate avenues for accomplishment and success.