

Sensitive periods



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The term " Sensitive Period" was first used by Hugo De Vries, a Dutch botanist and geneticist who spent much of his life researching animal development. His work largely related to the development of animals. He found that in nature different species show a higher sensitivity to learn a specific skill at a particular period in their lives. Hugo De Vries observed the lifecycle of the Prosthesis Butterfly. His work examined the first sensitive period in the early phase of development.

He noted that the Prosthesis Butterfly laid its eggs on the bark of a tree.

From these eggs emerged tiny caterpillars with an innate desire to feed. The mouth parts were so small they could not feed on the tough parts of the leaf they began to crawl towards light and by doing this; they found themselves on the softer side of the leaf where they could manage to eat the softest and most tender leaves. As the caterpillars had no experience in choosing food, they held an inherent instinct. Hugo De Vries asked himself, how do caterpillars know where to go?

He came to discover that the caterpillars had sensitivity for light, going to the tip of the leaf meant going toward the light. He then experimenting with caterpillars in a room with a little window, and when he introduced light through the window, the caterpillars went in that direction. After the caterpillars became larger, he conducted the same experiment and found that the caterpillars no longer moved towards the light in the window. So this confirmed that once they were large enough to eat any part of the leaf they didn't need this sensitivity to light anymore.

Maria Montessori, with extensive observational studies with young children from concluded that human beings too show the same characteristics. There

<https://assignbuster.com/sensitive-periods/>

are definite sensitive periods in children's lives during the first plane of development when they are extra sensitive to particular stimuli in their environment. Children absorb this opportunity and through repeated experiences master the skills. These skills will help the child build up the characteristic of a human being and if unhindered in their development will allow a person to reach their full potential.

After a certain period of time the sensitivity for the various stimuli pass and if during this period a child was unable to receive the necessary stimulus or is hindered in practicing the necessary skills needed, after the age of six; it would be very difficult or even impossible for that child to learn those skills later on in life. The absorbent mind takes in everything around in with equal importance. If we had only an absorbent mind all the information we received would be equally important. Every thing would demanding attention for our brain and would be in a state of chaos.

Because of the sensitive periods that are ' windows of opportunities' where some information is absorbed more than other information, like a flashlight shining on certain periods or like a camera zooming in and focusing on a detail and is like a power that directs the mind to a certain type of stimuli and helps the child learn with great ease and passion about it. Once the information has been gathered, the sensitive period passes. " These are like a beam that lights interiorly, or like a battery that furnishes energy. It is this sensibility that enables a child to come into contact with the external world in a particular intense manner.

At such a time everything is easy; all is life and enthusiasm" Maria Montessori, The secret of Childhood. Pg 40) Characteristics of Sensitive

Periods They are universal: They have been present in every person's childhood, regardless of where a child lives or what cultural background he/she has. The Sensitive Periods come and then disappear: they are active when certain things need to be learned and when they are learned the sensitive period disappeared, some disappear gradually, they come slowly, then peak at a certain point, and then leave slowly.

A transitory state once realized, the sensitive period disappears. Sensitive periods are never regained, once they have passed. They are unconscious: Similar to the absorbent mind, the child doesn't know he has sensitive period, and cannot express his need for certain stimuli and cannot influence them in any way. We can only see the outside effects of the sensitive periods through observation of the child. They correspond to the essential capacities necessary for the human being to develop. This can be mental, intellectual and physical.

For ex: refinement of movement has to do with both physical and intellectual. This period helps the child coordinate will and movement that help develop the intellect. They appear during the first plane of development, they are most obvious then. That is why this period is marked in red; it is an important period where the most activity is going on. They are overlapping: They appear at different times, but a child can have sensitivity for more than one (even two) stimuli at a time. The sensitive periods are an intense and prolonged activity.

They influence a child beyond curiosity; it is a passion, directing children to particular qualities and elements in the environment. They do not lead to fatigue or boredom, but instead leads to persistent energy and interest. The

child can appear fresh and active afterwards... The sensitive periods are of great importance for the children, it was through observation that Maria Montessori discovered the inner force that guides the children. She discovered six main Sensitive Periods a child will go through from birth till six.

Sensitive Periods

for	order	(1-3	years)
perfecting	movement	(1.	5-4 years)
language		(0-6		years)
perfecting	the	senses	(0-5 years)
social	relations	(2.	5	-6 years)
for small objects (2nd year)				

Sensitivity for Order

Starts at aprox: 6months-3years

Helps the child stabilize inner order

Is very important for the development of the child's intelligence Helps the child to categories and classify information

The child has a need for inner order

The young child needs ritual. If his life has a predictable rhythm and his routine is maintained, he begins to trust the environment. If his needs for food, sleep and bodily comfort are predictably met as they arise, he uses this satisfaction as the basis to feel secure and to explore his world. The child has a need for inner order: The idea of putting things into order for adults is very different from children. We become stressed if we don't have the time to

organize our thoughts, and once we organize ourselves and we feel calmer and happy, often we don't realize that it is our need for outer order.

The child has a need for inner order. The child needs outer order to influence the inner order. By creating order, the child is making an impression from which he creates his personality, this period helps the child structure and organize everything he has absorbed. By understanding this structure in life it will help the child become an important part of it. We can't influence the inner order of a child, but we influence the outer order or environment by putting things in order and in the same place everytime, to help positively influence their development during this sensitive time.

The child is sensitive to a spatial order; that is, everything has a place. When his environment is arranged the same way day after day, he comes to rely on it and can get his bearings. Children during this time can be very sensitive to any change, if they move to a new place; it can be very stressful for children when these outer changes appear. Many kinds of behavior difficulties come from children not being able to create order in his mind. " Obviously the love of order in children is not the same as that of adults. Order provides the adult with a certain amount of external pleasure. For he small children it is something quite different.

It is like the land on which the animals walk or the water in which fish swim" Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*, pg 53. This period does not start at birth. The baby has to get used to the world and culture around him before he can begin to organize things, and the brain has to be sufficiently developed before it can make use of this period. So once the child has had enough experiences in this world, then this period will appear. These periods

helps the child to categorize and classify information. Because our brain needs order, it's much easier to connect new experiences to former ones.

When you hear something new, if you heard it before, it's easier to compare it to the new information than if you never heard it before, so we need order in the brain to connect it to the new information. The role of the adult and the environment is to keep consistency and order in the classroom and with the boundaries. Let the children keep their promises, which helps them build trust. Keep the environment orderly, clean and objects in the same place so the children can easily find what they need. We can create routines, order in the environment to help them find their inner order.

Sensitive period for refinement of movement
Represents the essence of life.

Period helps the child coordinate will and movement that help develop the intellect. The hand is the brain's instrument
Basic movements are stabilized in the first 3 years

Movement represents the essence of life. Through movement of the muscles, the body becomes stronger and healthier and the child is able to perform more tasks. The baby, unable at birth to control any of his movements, doesn't even know he has hands and feet. But by about twelve months many babies take their first steps. Walking develops without being taught. An infant's need to walk is so strong that he becomes upset if he is impeded.

At 1 year old the child will start to stand, walk and balance, on the other part they start moving the hands as well, lots of in coordinated movement, the basic movements develop in the first years the child becomes conscious of his body, starts to use basic movements to coordinate his movements and
<https://assignbuster.com/sensitive-periods/>

will develop from a helpless human being to standing, walking and eventually control his body. This sensitive period will help the child coordinate will and movement that help develop the intellect.

The child can develop his will through movement, by acting on his interests, his will grows stronger. Children will often resist being carried or held by the hand, because of the restriction of his will and lack of movement, but if a child is able to develop unhindered, at the end of this period the child can control his movements better; and because a child has a tendency to repeat movements, he will repeat these movements until they are perfected. The movement of the hand is the brains instrument.

The child will do movements with his body and his hands in order to learn and grow. The child handles the objects in his environment with a purpose to imitate the actions of other in his family and surroundings; this helps him build up the necessary coordination that is crucial for organized movement. Often children find themselves in a world geared to adults, with adult sized objects that they are not permitted to touch or work with. The Adult and the environment Take them to new places. Offer opportunities where they can explore their environment safely and with fun.

Give them opportunities to participate in home activities such as cleaning, washing cooking etc... Resist helping unnecessarily Trust them (within reasonable expectations) Allow time for exploration Make sure they have an environment rich in concrete 'touchable' objects, like all the materials found in a Montessori class. Sensitive Period For language Is the most obvious of all the periods Helps the child learn one or many languages. Starts at birth At 3-4 discover the importance of written language

The Sensitive period for Language starts at birth, peaks around two years and slowly goes away at around 6 years. It is the human voice that he deeply hears and imitates. Because of this Sensitive period for language, the child who was absorbing all the sounds in his environment at once, begins to find some sounds more attractive than others, like the sound of people talking, languages, music. By listening and absorbing these sounds around himself, the child's provided with the necessary elements for his development.

There are no obvious manifestations of the sensitive period, since the young child is absorbing the languages and sounds that are necessary for his growth, but you can see his manifestations of it when the child shows his contentment when being read a story or sung a lullaby, and also shows anger and frustration when his needs are unsatisfied. By six months, the child can uttering his first syllables, by one year his first word. By one year, nine months he uses a few phrases, and by about two years old he "explodes" into language. He talks non-stop.

By the time he is three years old he is speaking in sentences and paragraphs with proper syntax and grammar. He can fully express himself to get his needs met. Children have the capability by the age of 3 to learn many languages. Even if the language is as complex and different as Chinese and English. This Period will last a little over the age of six, but becomes less and less intensive. The adult and environment. Young children copy facial expressions, and there is when we stabilize the base for communication. We talk to them. Start giving nouns with concrete objects and keep on adding to their vocabulary.

We can read to them. Start with simple books, rhymes and songs, and make a habit to read everyday. Speak clearly to them. Use soft voices and let them listen to various sounds. Give her opportunities for activities with sequencing, and matching. Give an environment that is rich in vocabulary. Give huge words and funny words and rhyming words and words in songs just what a child needs to meet his word hunger perfectly. Introduce written language to a child, when we recognize the interest in the written language when the child demonstrates an interest in letters that belong to him (name) and to his family (mom).

Sensitivity for refining the senses. Starts from birth till four years, The senses are the gates to intelligence; children need to collect sensorial information to develop their brains. The child has to use all his senses to gather information about the world. By using the senses the child will become better organized and classified impressions of the world. Sensitivity for small objects is connected to the sensitive period for perfection of the senses, they work together with each other, and they are connected. The senses develop before the child is born, taste, and can feel.

They can suck their thumbs in the womb. The largest part of their development happens after birth, because the brain needs the stimulus from the world, so the child is interested in all kinds of sensorial impression and uses his senses to learn about the world. During this sensitive period for refining the senses, the child feels the urge to touch and feel the objects in his surroundings; it is not the objects around the child that interests him but the stimuli he gets from handling those objects that interest him.

This is a period of physical growth and also a period of learning through the five senses. Because the child is developing his senses, his attention is on the environment surrounding him and the objects in that environment. Unfortunately there are many times when there are objects in the environment that the child is not allowed to handle. During the absorbent period the brain is taking in impressions of the environment, and the child has to use all his senses to gather information about the world, so the child will be able to organize and classify his impression of the world.

Sensitive period for small objects is a time when the children show a great attention and are fond of small details, they notice and appreciate objects with intricate or small details. This period is often mistaken for Sensitive Period for movement, because they become attentive to details. Also mistaken for the sensitivity to order. Sensitivity for small objects is connected to the sensitive period for refinement of the senses, they work together with each other, and they are connected. Role of the Adult and the environment

Make sure they have an environment rich in concrete 'touchable' objects, like all the materials found in a Montessori class. Allow them to explore new sights, sounds, smells and tastes to broaden their experiences. Give them safe things to taste, to touch and smell. Give them a variety of textures to feel. Talk to them sometimes very softly so that they are aware of sounds. Expose them to fine objects and show them how to appreciate them, how to carry them with great care and take of them in their environment. Sensitive Period for Social Relations from approx 2 and half- 5 years old

The children learn about the social rules for their culture. This period continues into the second plane but not as a sensitive period, in a different way. This period comes late in the child's development, it occurs around the age when a child becomes conscious of himself. Before that he didn't have chance to develop his social relations in the same way because he was occupied with himself. This is a time when the child becomes interested in playing with other children and the child starts doing things for others. The child also begins experimenting the ways he can be together with other people.

That's why there is lots of conflict with very young children, not because they are naughty, but because they have no understanding how they are influencing people, so they need to be constantly watched and helped, to keep them away from conflicts. Around 2 and a half or 3 we can expect children to experiment with relations, their behavior becomes consistent and we can trust them with friends. Around 4 and a half they become interest in greeting and social courtesies from their culture and they imitate polite and considerate behavior leading to an internalization of these qualities into the personality.

Role of the Adult and the environment. Have good interactions with the people we work with and parents. Be role models of grace and courtesy. Give the children opportunities to work together and solve their differences. Significance for Education If unhindered during a sensitive period children are: Able to have a deep concentration, even if they work a long time, they are still refreshes at the end of the activity. Does a lot of goal directed activity,

meaningful to the children, they will always use their hands when do these act. Do lots of repetition, happily with the same con.

Until they master the skill We see joy and harmony in the child, generally happy, takes care of the environment and cares for others. Are affectionate. If hindered during a sensitive period we see: A lot of frustration. Negative behavior, they don't listen, or do things you ask them not to do Has an inner conflict and is not happy Meaningless behavior, being agitated and screaming for no reason, without point. And is still unhappy. General Role of the adult Prepare the environment with everything a child needs during these periods. Give the children sufficient time and freedom to be active and independent.

Time and freedom to act on the impulses of the sensitive periods. Need to observe so we can see how these sensitive periods manifest themselves in children because they are not always the same. They all have them, but they look different depending on the temperament of the child We will prepare practically and mentally to meet the needs of the children ex: if a child touch surfaces or other children, we can say that he is prepared for sensorial. Remove hindrances: make sure our environment support the independence of the child and doesn't hinder it, that we help but not too much help. Be role models for the children.

Especially for the social relation and order period. They observe us when we greet and talk to parents. No 'timetables' should be imposed on the children (i. e. slots of time for specific activities, music, art, foreign language etc.) since these adult oriented groups could easily interrupt a child's concentration and thereby disrupt the spontaneous development that was

taking place. “ A child’s love of his surrounding appears to adults as the natural joy and vivacity of youth. But they do not recognize it as spiritual energy, a moral beauty which accompanies creation. ” (Maria Montessori, The Secret of Childhood, pg 103)