

# The influence of the absorbent mind, and the sensitive periods

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



In this essay I will define the Absorbent Mind and the Sensitive period and illustrate the influence of these periods on the child's development of movement, language and social skills. A child in his absorbent mind develops his movement, his language and social skills by soaking knowledge. He takes steps in different sensitive period and repeats his movements, words or social skill actions to improve and to perfect his movement, language and social skills. The Absorbent Mind: Dr. Maria Montessori uses the term Absorbent Mind to describe the child's mental capacity for soaking up knowledge and information unconsciously (Handbook).

The influence of the Absorbent Mind lasts from birth to approximately six years of age. She divided the absorbent mind in two phases. During the first phase, from birth to three years old (the unconscious absorbent mind), the young child unconsciously acquires his basic abilities. " The period of the absorbent mind was divided into an early phase, from age one to three, when the Child's mind functions unconsciously and learning results from interacting with and responding to environmental stimuli.

During this key period, children begin to construct their own personality and intelligence through their environmental exploration and the sensations they experience during these encounters. The children begin to acquire the language and culture into which they are born. " (The Montessori Method. 2004. Maria Montessori. Page 50) The child learns to speak, to walk, to gain control of his hands, to master his bodily functions and works to become independent in this period. I worked with one toddler when I was a supply

teacher in BSA. He had delayed speech and used to express himself by crying.

Then he started developing language and he kept repeating words like sit, hat, shoe. Later on I realized his vocabulary was increasing. He could express his feelings with words rather than crying. The child moves into the next phase of the absorbent mind, which is the period of conscious work or the conscious absorbent mind. During this period, the child apply his knowledge consciously in his life. The Sensitive Period: The sensitive period is part of Absorbent Mind and in this overlapping periods the child is particularly sensitive to certain types of stimuli or interactions.

The sensitive period is a term which refers specific times of intense interest in particular activities or for the learning of particular skills or concepts. Each sensitive period lasts for only as long as is necessary for the child to accomplish a particular stage in development. Hand book. " A child learns to adjust himself and make acquisitions in his sensitive period. ( The Secret of Childhood, Maria Montessori, 1972. Page 40). The child physically and mentally adjust himself with the environment in his sensitive period.

Last year a toddler started at our school. She cried for months, and she had a lot of anxiety. One of my duties is to stay one hour in the toddler room at naptime. I noticed that she was trying to find comfort under her blanket and was holding a comb in her hand which she bought from home. She was trying to adjust in the school environment and was seeking help from her personal belongings. Sensitive periods are characterized by behaviors such as an activity being irresistible for a child once he starts it.

In each period children are especially sensitive to a specific characteristic in his environment. These periods are very specific and unique for a child development. If the child will not be able to satisfy his needs during those periods the opportunity of a natural conquest is lost for good. Influence of the absorbent mind and the sensitive period on child's development of movement: The Absorbent Mind and the the Sensitive Period influence greatly on children's development of movement. " Development is a series of re-births.

There comes a time when one psychic personality ends, and another begins" (The Absorbent Mind, 2007. Maria Montessori . Page #17). The *Horme* (a Montessori term meaning 'instinct' or 'unconscious will power') is the dominant influence on the child in the first 3 years of life. All impressions are stored in the *Mneme* which is described as the recording by the subconscious memory of all sensations experienced by an individual. As the child develops into the second sub-phase of the First Plane of Development, the child's will emerges and replaces the influence of the *Horme*.

The first three years of life are crucial for a child's development. Dr. Montessori explains how mental movement is connected with physical movement, and depends on it. Movement helps the development of the mind and improved expression in further movement and activity. Dr. Maria Montessori said, " The child passes through successive phases of development, and in each of these surroundings have an important-through different-part to play. " -(The Absorbent Mind, 2007, Maria Montessori, Page #88, Chapter #9).

Montessori materials and exercises help to improve a child physically, mentally and it comes in phases and in series and allows the child towards more complex movements. As an example in Practical Life the child learns walking on the line, then walk with spoon and then walk with a marble on spoon and so on. Influence of the absorbent mind and the sensitive period on child's language: The Sensitive Period is an ideal time to learn language. At birth a child has the ability to learn any language.

The child is exposed through daily interaction in the home and through this, learns complex grammatical structures without being taught. Within the space of 3 months, the child, who previously could not speak, learns to use all the varied forms of his mother tongue. " Explosion into language" takes place around the age of 2 years. The child develops vocabulary used at home in his Sensitive Period for Language, then he explores language by talking, and then gradually by writing and reading. Notes from Helen Traicus.

At birth the child reacts human voices, vocalization develops, responds to speech, use single words, talks incessantly to refine their language and vocabulary and understand everything by the age of three. The Absorbent Mind and the Sensitive Period assist the development of language. Montessori activities like Sound Games , classified card, stories, poetry, self-expression helps a child to Enrichment of Vocabulary and language. As Maria Montessori mentioned, " We must have a scientific knowledge of the development of language. By helping the child, we become servers and collaborate with the nature. "(The Absorbent mind, 2007, Maria Montessori,

Page 112, Chapter 11) If we follow the Montessori Method, the intelligence and social skill of the child increases at a higher level.

I observed my own children's videos from zero to three years age and the gradual development of their linguistic development. First they used body language, afterward came single words. Next they combined single word with body language and they developed using combination of words. By the time they reached age two, they had their language to express themselves.

Influence of the absorbent mind and the sensitive period on child's social skills: Social reaction comes in steps with a smile, then sound, interactive play, love, friendly to familiar faces, followed by reactions to strangers. The child interact with other children and sometimes plays independently. Subsequently, imitates social customs. Prepared environment in a Montessori classroom give support to a child in the field of social development. " Play-therapy leaves the child free to choose between many toys and imitative games –a more varied selection than the home can usually offer.

It is found that this, combined with interpretations by the psychiatrist (leading to advice which improves the child's treatment at home) can bring about improvements in the child's character, though this is also attributable to social life with other children. "- (The Absorbent Mind, 2007, Maria Montessori, Page186, Chapter 19). Montessori schools prepared environment strengthened the character of child and his intellectual life. The child performs spiritual exercises, walk towards the road of self-perfectionment and of ascent to the inner heights of the soul. The entire lesson of grace and

courtesy teaches the child how to behave and establish himself in the society.

Conclusion: The Absorbent Mind and the Sensitive Period plays the most important role on the child's development of movement, language and social skills. A child absorbs knowledge and stores in his memory during the first part of Absorbent Mind. In the second part of Absorbent Mind he uses stored information consciously from his memory and apply those in his life and actions. A child also uses his sensitive periods to learn and improve his movement, actions, language and social skills.