

# Role of a directress in a child's normalization essay



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“ Normalization is the single most important result of our work”(Absorbent Mind-pg: 204 , chapter 19) According to Dr: Maria Montessori normalization (the child's true nature) is one of her main discoveries. Normalization is a word taken from anthropology meaning “ becoming a contributing member of the society”. The young children with short attention span learning to focus and concentrate their work for a given period of time is the process of normalization. It happens at the first stage of development (0-6) and occurs when the child is developing normally.

Maria Montessori saw a normalized child as a new level of humanity. Her message was to see that there is much more to childhood than is currently recognized. When Montessori recognized the process of normalization she recognized another process called deviation. According to her view the child have two streams of energy while growing up . They are physical energy of the body and mental energy of intelligence and when the mind and body cannot work in unison there happens deviation. Dr. Montessori felt that the process of deviation and normalization is going on all the time; it is what the children are engaged in.

Deviation occurs when the child has the will to act but his movements are restricted, when he has interest but his needs are not met. Deviation is a defense created when the child's development cannot be in normal way. All children coming into adaptation have some kind of deviations, some grow out of it and some don't, if this is not corrected out they will become worse in the coming time. Maria Montessori considers the following as the main reasons for deviation in behavior- lack of intellectual nourishment for the

mind and lack of spontaneous activity which is prompted by internal impulses. Deviation is categorized in several ways .

Deviations which are thought to be normal for children and foster by adults are like, over attachment to some family member, laziness, overeating, inability to attention , etc. And where as some deviations thought to be normal, but not deliberately fostered by adults are disobedience, quarrel, untidiness, etc. (www. michaelolaf. net/lecture\_secret. html) Environment is a main factor in child's normalization. To support the child development . The environment should be made according to the child's desire, like we can make the furniture's to be child sized and this helps the easy access for them.

This way child feels a sense of belonging to his environment. Order is another important factor in an environment in order to provide order in the child's work cycle and it helps the child to choose according to his will. The activities given for the child have to be related to the nature and true life. Because the lack of exposure to the reality can lead the child to different kind of deviations, some are like the psychic fugue where the child creates his own fantasy world or psychic barrier, when he construct a barrier against his reality.

Practical life exercises like pouring, spooning, moving heavy object around the class all helps in the child's mental development, co-ordination, and their concentration, which are the main factors for normalization. For example, moving a jug of water from a table to another involves the learning of their co-ordination in movements and concentration and here they are in contact

with real objects. They need real objects instead of fake one, so they learn to be familiar with the materials around their everyday life .

Unless we adults do trust them with the glassware's, they cannot trust themselves to use the glass wares without breaking them . Here we are giving our faith in the growing child and the helping him to have the faith in himself and reveal himself. " A real co-ordination of movement perfects the whole person. (The discovery of a Child, pg306: chapter 23)" But apart from all these in a Montessori environment an adult or a teacher plays the important role in the child's process of normalization. Here she is not the focal point but she is the link between the environment and the child, who uses the prepared environment to construct himself.

According to Montessori, a teacher's primary function is not so much to teach as to direct a natural energy in the children, hence she named them as ' directress'. (Maria Montessori: Her life and work , pg 297-chapter XV111). A directress is the custodian or a keeper of the environment, she have to be very careful in preparing the environment for her child, with perfect balance between interesting activities and not over doing it because if something goes in wrong way it will be the reason for the child's distraction or deviation .

A directress have to prepare herself to spirituality, she have to put on humility and purify her heart and prepare to serve the child. A directress lead the child to be independent and improve himself individually . This helps the child to interact with his companions in joy and harmony . In an ordinary school the children have less exposure to the social life where as in a

Montessori environment the child is frequently exposed to social interactions. One of the great ways in helping the child for his social life is the 'vertical integration' in a prepared environment .

The mixed age group in a class helps them in socializing, younger child interacts with the elder one and learn things which sometimes an adult cannot teach them. The elder child also get a chance to teach the younger one, what he have learned and this also helps him in making his knowledge more accurate. This brings a sense of responsibility, and the moral understanding is experienced without even an adult guiding them. I have realized many times that my younger one studies things from her elder sister much better than what I try to teach, even though she listen to my way of teaching she prefer to work with her sister. There is a communication and a harmony between the two that one seldom finds between the adult and the small child. "(Absorbent Mind, pg 226, chapter 22).

All these and more from an prepared environment leads the child to his normalization and his social development. Dr. Montessori considered normalization as transforming child behavior from deviated to normal. "When children of 3 years of age come to us, almost all of them demonstrate abnormal but changeable personal characteristics". (Montessori, Child Mind-176. pg, [http://pmswebsite.fatcow. om/teacherarticles/Prybylska, Normalization. pdf](http://pmswebsite.fatcow.om/teacherarticles/Prybylska,Normalization.pdf) )

Unfortunately , the teachers don't have any control over the environment where her child comes from nor she have much control over the diversity they have developed , but she have the control for the time the child spend

with her in the classroom. This is the time for a directress to work on to give the hope, the dreams and the tools for the child's normalization or his self construction. A directress treats her child as individual, she understands each child for their own, for this she need a better relation with her child.

When a child arrives for the first time a directress realize that the child she finds is not appeared at , here she don't look for how the child is deviated or don't think about correcting him, but for her each of them are normalized . She must have the faith in her child to help the child progress further. " The teacher, when she begins work in our school, must have a kind of faith that the child will reveal himself through work" (Absorbent Mind , pg 276 Chapter 27) As a wife keeps her house in perfect condition for herself and husband, so is the directress to her child's environment.

She is the keeper of the child's environment and who makes the environment in pleasant and proper care and in good condition and in order, for him. She herself has to be in pleasing, calm and attractive in manner to gain the child's confidence in her. A directress has to practice her movements and expressions to be more gentle and graceful as possible. She has to show her talents to help the child into concentration; she has to introduce the materials in very interesting way yet not overdoing it. Always a lively person is more attracted than a dull one.

It's the same in a teacher's case when it comes into interaction of her kids. The role of a directress is to introduce the materials for child to his work and then when she sees the child's interest has begun her work is to step back and observe the child. But now the directress have to be very careful not to

interfere with his work , because sometimes a word of praise or even a look can change his work . As adults we ourselves become uneasy once we realize we are being watched. The great principle of a teacher ' s success is:" as soon as the concentration has begun, act as if the child does not exist. (Absorbent Mind, pg 280: Chapter 27).

Once the child begins to concentrate on his materials provided, he starts working with them in the proper way . The child learns to focus and inside he fights against his difficulties. " As soon as children find something that interests them they lose their instability and learn to concentrate. "(The Secret of Childhood, pg 145, Chapter 21). Once the child starts his work he won't move around the class for no reason, he will be able to choose his next activities without any guidance.

There is possibility for problems to arise at this stage where the same materials are chosen by many, but a directress is not supposed to interfere in this also, unless asked. Because a normalized child is in position to solve his problem without hurting his companions . The only care for deviation is " normalization through work", says Montessori. A directress job is to serve the spirit of her child. Once normalized the child is centered and free to concentrate on other areas of work , the directress must arouse the child's interest and may bring him to work , for this she can start by singing , or storytelling , as long as the child is pleased.

Practical Life exercise helps the child in concentration, as all the work involved its level of complexity. If the child is given the appropriate work at the right movement, he will be engaged in concentration for hours. As for my

3 yrs old girl , I realized she prefer helping me in kitchen like sorting the vegetables or washing the fruits or doing the wiping for her to eat than watching her favorite cartoons. Once normalized, child can concentrate and progress on different materials.

Montessori stated, “ Before introducing this kind of material, one must wait till the children have acquired the power to concentrate on something, and usually, as I say, this occurs with the exercise of practical life. ”(Absorbent mind, chapter 27, pg. 225) Once the child is normalized and start doing his work directress are not suppose to interrupt, but if he wish for an approval from her she wouldn't hesitate to do so. If a directress or an adult has done her part as observer, demonstrator, and as a server to the child, who was entrusted in her care she will see the qualities of social life bursting.

The unconscious decision of a new born to go back, instead of moving forward to his development is known as regression. “ Instead of making progress those who suffer from a negative reaction to the shock of being born give the impression of still being attached to the state of affairs before birth. ”(Absorbent Mind, pg 76 chapter 7). The first days after birth the child's needs his mother's care and attention, to awaken his general instincts and this helps him into the adaptation of his world. Regressive tendencies are usually due to lack of his inner urge to guide to his adaptation. The lack of proper sensitiveness is one of the main reason.

Because if a child doesn't goes through his sensitive periods he is not able to absorb his environment in the proper way, which will blocks his mental development, his love of environment, his ability to speak his language with



proper pronunciation, etc. The child's inability to express himself leads to his regression. If a directress is not able to perform her duty she cannot help the child in his personality construction or in his concentration. And this can be a reason for a child to regress from normality. Starving the child from the proper environment is also another chance for the child to regress.

The teacher must be warned of two things: the first, not to insist by repeating the lesson; and second not to make the child feel that he has made a mistake, or that he is not understood. "(The Essential Montessori. pg 88. )The adult can easily hurt the child through making him feel inferior or incompetent and sometimes it happens even by stopping a child from doing things of their will. Like we adults most of the time stops the child from lifting a jug of water or something breakable, but unconsciously we are stopping them from their freedom to choose their work, which might most of the time brings disappointment in the child.

Also mothers can be over protective towards their children. As for myself I always serve my younger one with her needs as she was having some difficulties in her earlier stage we had an habit of taking more attention in her things. Whereas my elder one was very independent from us, she chooses to do her work herself and now she is much matured and independent I feel. As for the younger she cling to me all the time , but once we have realized the mistake and we try to implement the method I have learned and things are getting better .

And now she started schooling and lots of improvements and thanks to her teacher for helping me out. In conclusion a directress role is very important

in the child's process of normalization. " When the child educates himself, and when the control and correction of errors is yielded to the didactic materials, there remains for the teacher nothing but to observe"(The Essential Montessori. pg 91). As adults we have to understand a child's need and provide to his needs. We are not only supposed to give the material things for a child but also must help him in his creation of humanity.