

THE CHILD'S SPECIAL MIND



Montessori Children's Foundation
Learning Series

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TWO UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS


- The Absorbent Mind
- Sensitive Periods of Development



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THE ABSORBENT MIND


The **quality** of mind of a child before the age of 6.



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ANALOGY OF THE OLDER STYLE CAMERA	
The child takes in tiny details and does not discriminate (captured instantly)	

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ANALOGY OF THE SPONGE	
Information is absorbed like a sponge	


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ABSORBENT MIND CHARACTERISTICS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Is a universal characteristic of children· It is different from the adult mind· It is effortless· It is unlimited· It functions 24/7· It is creative by nature· It takes everything in, without discrimination	

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HOW DOES IT WORK?

UNCONSCIOUS → CONSCIOUS



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UNCONSCIOUS ABSORBENT MIND



- Birth to 2.5 / 3yrs
- Unaware of what they are absorbing
- This absorption just happens - it is effortless

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CONSCIOUS ABSORBENT MIND



2.5 - 6 Years

- The child becomes aware of what he is learning.
- He begins to make choices.
- He begins to exert his will and develops memories

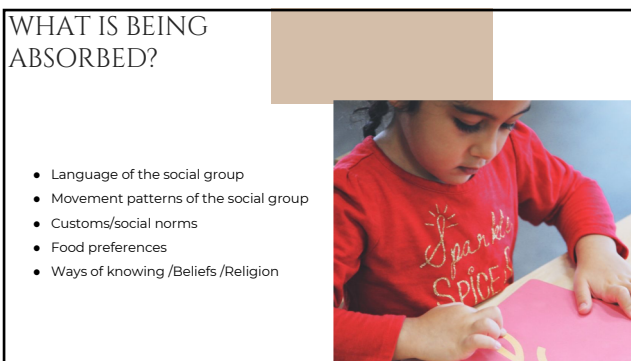
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ANALOGY OF FILM IN A DARK ROOM

The child's information is stored unseen until it develops.

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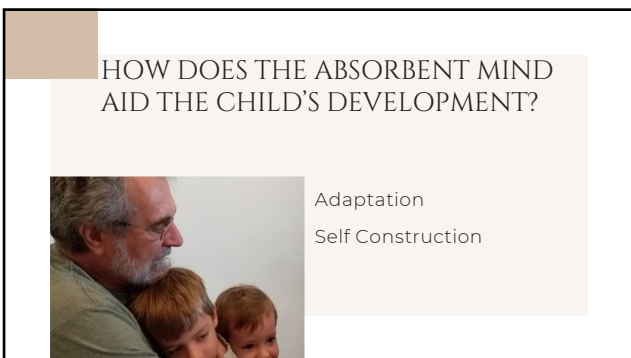


WHAT IS BEING ABSORBED?


- Language of the social group
- Movement patterns of the social group
- Customs/social norms
- Food preferences
- Ways of knowing /Beliefs /Religion



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HOW DOES THE ABSORBENT MIND AID THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?




Adaptation
Self Construction

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**ABSORBENT MIND
& THE PROCESS OF ADAPTATION**

First stage - 'to be'
Second stage - 'becoming'
Third stage - 'belonging'.



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ABSORBENT MIND FADES

The Absorbent Mind only exists in the first 6 years of life, then it fades.



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ABSORBENT MIND & THE ENVIRONMENT

A well prepared environment helps the Absorbent Mind construct themselves.




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WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

We can learn and have faith in the child.

We can respect the child

We can carefully prepare ourselves and the classroom



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SENSITIVE PERIODS OF DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Montessori observed that the child experiences irresistible urges which highlight certain aspects of the environment where learning becomes easy.



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SENSITIVE PERIODS DIRECT THE ABSORBENT MIND

Direct the mind's energy

Children become intensely interested in things they need to learn

Interaction with their environment is heightened

Can acquire knowledge/skills without much effort.



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HOW SENSITIVE PERIODS DEVELOP

Internal - taking place inside the child, invisible to us.


External - visible. Little by little by the activity in the environment, it becomes external



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HOW WE RECOGNISE SENSITIVE PERIODS

1. Attraction to the environment
2. The child observes
3. Big effort
4. Repetition
5. Concentration
6. Joy



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HOW SENSITIVE PERIODS MANIFEST



INTENSE INTEREST IN AN ASPECT OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT

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ATTRACTION TO AN ACTIVITY

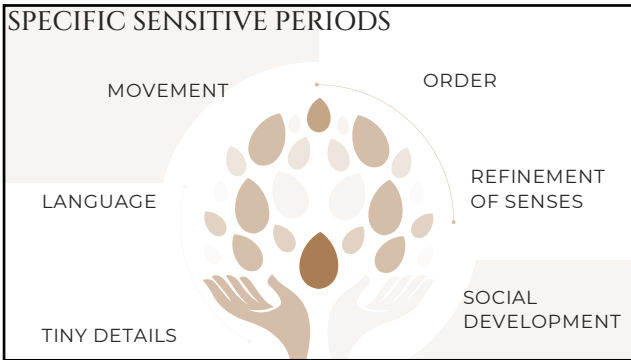
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DOING AN ACTIVITY

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ACHIEVED LEARNING!


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HOW DO SENSITIVE PERIODS AID THE CHILD?

- Connect children to the world
- Help them acquire skills
- Help them gain knowledge of their world
- Helps them reach their potential
- Helps them adapt to their culture



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WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

- Physical Environment
- Human Environment



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"If a child has not been able to act according to the directives of his sensitive period, the opportunity of a natural conquest is lost, and is lost for good."
Montessori, M. (1998) *The Secret of Childhood* P. 39.

ANALOGY OF THE KNITTED JUMPER
If we drop a stitch we can still wear it to keep warm but it is not as strong.

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CONCLUSION

The **Sensitive Periods** facilitate self-direction, concentration, intrinsic motivation and, eventually, self-discipline.

They act to focus the **Absorbent Mind** to develop a child adapted to the culture they are born into.

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Task 1 - Watch a video of a child arranging flowers in a Montessori toddler community

Task 2 - Answer questions relating to the Child's Special Mind

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