

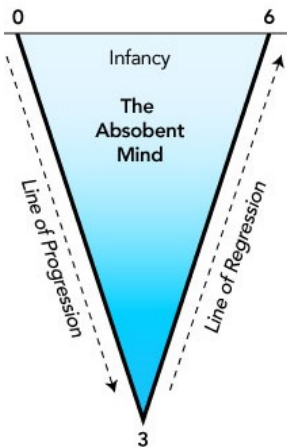
## *How the birth to 6-year-old child gains knowledge with their 'Absorbent Mind'.*

### Considerations:

1. The child's mind from birth to six years absorbing knowledge without any implicit teaching.
2. Prepare the environment to support your child's mind.
3. What does your child see you do?
4. Use positive and real/extension language when talking to your child, e.g., a leaf, an oval leaf, a leaf stem.

Montessori's research found that the knowledge children have is acquired early through each child having an 'absorbent mind'. She used this term as a way to describe the phenomena of the child's mind from birth to six years absorbing knowledge without any implicit teaching. For example, no-one teaches a child how to speak their parents' native tongue, yet the child generally comes to use the parts of grammar and communicates with all around them.

*The first plane of development highlights the child's absorbent mind*



*The line of progression* highlights the absorption of the whole environment.

*The line of regression* highlights the acquisition period.

An adult mind, as it is, is not able to do what the child's mind does. To develop a language from nothing needs a different type of mental ability. This the child has. Their intelligence is not of the same kind as an adult. It may be said that we acquire knowledge by using our minds; but the child absorbs knowledge directly into their psychic life. Simply by continuing to live, the child learns to speak their native tongue. A kind of mental chemistry goes on within them.

Adults, by contrast, are recipients. Impressions pour into us and we store them in our minds; but we ourselves remain apart from them, just as a vase keeps separate from the water it contains. Instead, the child undergoes a transformation. Impressions do not merely enter their mind; they form it.

“The child creates their own ‘mental muscles,’ using for this what they find in the world about them” (p.26). Montessori named this, the Absorbent Mind.

For us, it is very difficult to conceive of the young child's mental power. “How wonderful it would be if adults could retain the prodigious capacity we had as children, of romping happily, jumping and playing, while learning at the same time the whole of a new language in all its intricacy! How marvellous if all knowledge came into our minds simply as a result of living, without any need for more effort than is required to eat or breathe! At first, we should notice no particular change. Then, suddenly, the things we had learned would all appear in our minds like shining stars of knowledge” (p.26).

Young children “learn everything without realising they are learning it, and in doing so they pass little by little from the unconscious to the conscious, treading always in the paths of joy and love.

Human learning seems to us a great thing; to be aware of our knowledge; to have the human form of mind. But we have to pay for this, for no sooner do we become conscious than every fresh piece of knowledge costs us effort and hard work” (p.26).