



THIRD PLANE OF DEVELOPMENT

12-15 YEARS

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that children and adolescents develop through a series of four planes. Each of these planes have clear, defining characteristics. When we understand these stages, we can approach our interactions with children and adolescents with a new perspective.

Learning about the planes of development isn't just for Montessori educators. Understanding your adolescent's development can help at home, too.

Physical/Sexual

- Height and weight increase
- Appetite may increase
- Hormonal levels change
- Sexual characteristics develop
- Exploration of sexuality and interest in physical attractiveness develops

Social/Emotional

- Ability to express feelings improves
- Close friendships become important
- Awareness of parents' imperfections grows; affection towards parents declines
- Childish behavior returns in times of stress
- Interest in privacy increases
- Concern about being "normal" heightens

Cognitive

- Interest focuses on the present more than the future
- Ability to do all kinds of work—physical, intellectual, emotional—expands
- Capacity for abstract thought increases
- Risk-taking may emerge

Morals/Values

- Testing of limits and rules increases
- Ideals develop; evidence of conscience becomes more apparent
- Questioning of moral rights increases
- Sensitivity toward social justice and personal dignity develops

THIRD PLANE OF DEVELOPMENT 15-18 YEARS

Physical/Sexual

- Full physical development
- Weight and height gain continue
- Eating habits become sporadic

Social/Emotional

- Independence increases
- Stronger sense of identity
- Awareness of inner life
- Delayed gratification possible
- Engagement with parents declines as social networks expand and new friendships form
- Emotional steadiness improves
- Concern for others grows
- Interest in career grows

Cognitive

- Interest shifts to future
- More focus on goals, ambitions, roles
- Planning capability expands—setting goals and following through
- Risk-taking behavior may continue
- Metacognition develops: ability to self-analyze and think outside oneself forms

Morals/Values

- Interest in moral reasoning; passion for social justice may occur
- Interest in social, cultural, and family tradition expands
- Emphasis on personal dignity and self-esteem