

Activity: "Discovering Sensitive Periods Through Play"

Purpose

To help childcare providers identify and understand children's sensitive periods by observing developmental cues through a playful, interactive simulation.

Objectives

- Recognize key sensitive periods in early childhood (language, movement, order, refinement of senses, social relationships).
 - Experience how environmental design supports these periods.
 - Reflect on how to adjust classroom environments and activities to meet developmental needs.
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Materials

- Colored cards labeled with *Sensitive Periods*: Language, Movement, Order, Senses, Social Relationships
- Activity stations representing each period (set up around the room):
 - Language Station: Picture cards and vocabulary matching game
 - Movement Station: Obstacle course or fine-motor threading beads
 - Order Station: Sorting or sequencing task (like arranging objects by size or pattern)



- Senses Station: Mystery bags for touch and smell
 - Social Station: Cooperative building or role-play task
 - Observation checklist for each participant
 - Clipboards and pens
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Procedure

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

Briefly review Montessori's concept of *Sensitive Periods* and the *Planes of Development*.

Explain that participants will rotate through activities designed to mimic what children experience during these phases.

2. Activity Rotation (25-30 minutes)

Divide participants into small groups. Each group spends 5 minutes at each station completing the activity.

While participating, they should note:

- Which skills are being naturally drawn out?
- How the environment supports or hinders engagement?
- What cues signal developmental readiness?

3. Reflection & Discussion (15 minutes)

Bring everyone together and discuss:

- Which activities felt effortless or naturally engaging?



- How did environmental factors (order, materials, guidance) influence participation?
 - How can these observations translate to supporting children's sensitive periods in the classroom?
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Extension Idea

Have participants design their own "Prepared Environment" for a chosen age group. They should plan one activity for each sensitive period and explain how the setup supports independence and curiosity.

Learning Outcome

By experiencing sensitive periods through guided play and reflection, participants internalize how to recognize developmental readiness and create responsive environments that nurture children's natural learning drives.

