

Characteristics of the Second Plane Child:

(6 or 7 years old)

1. **Physical Characteristics of the second plane child:** hair becomes coarse, their first teeth begin to fall out, their bodies become leaner, and their heads balance out with their bodies. The physical stamina increases. The child likes to take risks in the outdoor environment. He/she likes to challenge the body's ability to do things like climbing trees or doing physical activities that challenge the body. When a second plane child gets hurt, she/he tends to overlook the injury.

Ask yourself if your student notices physical pain or overlooks it after the initial surprise?

The second plane child loses the sense of neatness and cleanliness outside of the mind. They are absorbed in learning new things internally. They forget to put things away or wash their hands before another activity begins.

Ask yourself if your student finds external neatness a distraction, rather than a necessity? Does the child's work space merit a disorderly quality but the child is learning so much that he/she doesn't notice the chaos?

2. **The need to separate from family:** the family and school environment are not enough for the second plane child. The second plane child desires to experience a greater society.

Does your student express a need to explore places outside of our school/home environments? Does the child walk ahead of the parents when coming into the school or exiting the school? Does the child ask to visit other classrooms independently of an adult? Can the child speak for him/herself in new situations? Does the child seek independence and new places?

3. **Group Instinct:** The second plane child seeks out group work that is meaningful and exciting. Montessori called this, *instincto gregario*. Children form gangs or groups during the second plane. The child is concerned with social rules and will experiment with how society works.

Ask yourself if the child is: a) getting a chance to interact with a large enough group of students every day to see this characteristic b.) Is the child able to work in a group for the three-hour work period?

The elementary child must have the ability for a sustained three-hour work cycle.

4. **Moral Development:** The emerging second plane child needs to understand him/herself and have the opportunity to use his/her own judgment. This child is seeking a sense of justice in social situations. The emerging second plane child should be encouraged to use their judgment for justice.

Does the child seek to find an answer to a social problem without the intervention of an adult? Does the child ask you questions about what is fair or right in a situation? Are your answers consistent? Does the child pick up on discrepancies in your judgment and point them out to you?

5. **Imagination:** The emerging second plane child constantly asks “why” and “how” for everything! She seeks to question the universe and can imagine the explanations, rather than sensorial images. The second plane child is driven by imagination.

Does the child ask questions about a concept that does not have a sensorial material to explain it? Does the child remember something that he/she experienced and writes about it, while coming up with a new idea about the experience? Does the child explore books and draw conclusions about a topic without actually seeing the subject? Does the child make up stories and write about them?

“Touching for the younger child is what imagining is for the older one.” To Educate the Human Potential

6. **Reasoning:** The emerging second plane child should be asking the reason for things. She/he wants to develop the intellect. This is closely linked to the imagination because the child asks the how and why questions. The child likes to discuss her/his findings with other peers. The child is driven to classify things. They like to collect items and identify them in categories.

Does the child ask to collect items and classify them? Does the child ask to work with others in naming activities or in category activities? Does the child stay in the work and discuss it with his/her peers?

7. **Power of Abstraction:** The emerging second plane is most evident in this area.

Is the child able to abstract information?

The first plane child is sensorial; the second plane child seeks out abstraction through his/her imagination. For example, a great test on abstraction is a game you can play during your lunch with the child. Describe an animal without telling the name of it.

Can the child guess the name of the animal correctly? Can you give a simple math problem and the child can calculate the answer without materials? Can the child write an imaginative story he/she made up?

8. **The need for BIG work:** The emerging second plane child gets excited about making big problems to work out.

Does the child ask for a huge problem to work out? Does she/he ask for friends to help him/her?

The child may need to check the answer with sensorial materials. Make sure the materials are available for checking work in the classroom, rather than an adult answer.

9. **The sense of responsibility:** The emerging second plane child is utilizing imagination, abstract thought, and morality. They are now able to understand the results for their actions. They can empathize with other people. They take responsibility for their actions, even if the results are hard or negative.

Does the child take responsibility for actions? Does the child empathize with others? Does the child employ the will to abstract how someone else is feeling?

Note:

Many of the questions in this document should serve as a guide to understanding if a child is emerging into the second plane of development. Not all children will display all of these characteristics at the same time, but most of these questions about most of the characteristics should be very easy to answer.