

To introduce

Barbara Clark R.N. of Wellesley, Massachusetts, who has had many years of experience, in the care and postural development of babies and children.

Mrs. Clark is giving particular attention to the child's use of equipment; and what factors could be improved to give better balance, coordination, and relaxation during the hours of the child's play with equipment.

~~which will be fully answered~~
To Mrs. Hazard at
WHA.

The Tunnel Toy, and the new Bannister Toy (as yet unnamed) The only one is in the Harvard Nursery School.

Every child, in his earliest years, is interested in discovering for himself, how to balance and move his body.

Nature endows him, as a baby, with structural units (that is bones), through which to learn to balance his weight; and with activity interest (expressed through muscles) to move this weight.

Nature also helps him at the start, by letting his body balance, in the easiest way for him, the horizontal position.

This is the position in which he lies in his crib,

- 2 -

in his carrriage, on a firm bed,
or on a blanket or rug on the
floor or ground. Through squirming
and wriggling he commences gaining
control whether lying on his back
or abdomen or either side.

The baby uses the horizontal
position until he has some
control over the various ways
of moving his body parts in
this earliest level. Head coordinating
motion, arm movements, picking,
balancing on the front and
side of the body, rolling,
inching along are all movements
he uses in achieving this control.
To aid the baby in attaining this
body development, clothing must be
loose, and the resting surface in
crib or carrriage, must be firm.
Otherwise the baby settles into the mattress
and movement is more difficult.

and consequently these important activities are hindered.

Time frequently taken by the parent to place the baby on a firm surface, as often as his feeding and sleep routine allows, would help the child build stronger trunk muscles. Important ones of these are those of the lower back, and deep abdominal wall. Good development of them will give good standing and sitting posture, in the years ahead for the child, and enable him to develop better form, and endurance in the sports and skills.

Having developed as much as the horizontal level afforded

~~then~~ the child begins to try to balance, and move, in what may be termed the semi vertical level. In this the child comes up onto his elbows and his knees, and then his hands and feet.

This motion is called the crawling or creeping action, or progression. And it too, is a very important method.

Crawling allows good balance, of the body trunk.

~~It~~ ^{Crawling} allows the child to get about quite rapidly.

~~It~~ ^{Crawling} saves the feet and legs, from carrying the body weight, as soon.

Doctors and ⁵educators have both written, and advised, the use of the crawling action, in developing the child's structure. But there has not been sufficient education, of the parents, and others in charge of children, to make them sufficiently realize the importance of crawling, so that they arrange the environment with this purpose in mind.

The playpen can serve well for the squirming and rolling about stages, of a few months old baby, but the crawling child should be outside of the playpen a large part of his activity time. He can crawl about the rooms, when beds are being made.

68-
He can crawl about the kitchen
or dining room, when dishes
are being washed. And he can
crawl about the living room
when the family gathers there.

Here ~~are~~ ~~some~~ things the mother
or caretaker can do, to remove
possible prejudice on this
score, by different members
of the household. Put your
choice dishes or living room
articles away, during the
period of early crawling.
Remove table scarves or
runners, that he could attempt
to remove for you. See that
there are no heavy objects,
for the time being, that he
could pull over on to himself.

Rearrange a room, or allow suitable space for a few months, for crawling gymnastics. Don't remove all interesting features such as bureau drawers and cupboards.

A little thought on the part of the parent, could add to the baby's interest, in crawling from one thing to another. Such as an avoidance of too many toys. Small blocks can make an uncomfortable passage way for the child on the floor and discourage him from crawling.

The same body has to last one all the years of their life. An automobile can be turned in for a new car. New parts can be purchased for machines in general

8
but the body is made for a
lifetime service. The service
it gives, and the manner in
which it allows us to remain
active, and useful, throughout our
life depends to a considerable
extent, on the early habits
we establish in balance -
coordination - and relaxation.

We all know that habits
are formed early in life, and
that the older one grows the
more difficult, it becomes
to change a habit. For this
reason infants and children
manner and habit of motion,
should receive sufficient
time and attention; and
every means of aid, studied
and where possible, used.

To summarize ;

Even a small baby has his special interests.

His coordinating motions ~~that~~ are of great importance in his development.

The environment should be arranged to give him the best possible advantage.

Easy balance of his body with easy progression, is an excellent activity for him, early in life.

The child will concentrate on activity the larger part of his waking time.

Equipment should be carefully chosen, with this in mind.

10

Research could well be done
in this field. ^{There should be} a study of
the positions the child's body
necessarily assumes when
using any piece of equipment.

Is the child using the
best positions for the
development of the body
structure at his age?

Is the use of this
equipment giving good
results in balance
coordination relaxation?

Answers 11

1. By giving him a firm enough surface to support the trunk of the body, so that he will not settle into a hole in the mattress, pad, or quilt.
2. By placing him on a firm surface such as a blanket or pad over the playpen floor one to two hours a day at a few months old and increasing the time with his age.
3. By observing what he is doing and is ready for and adapting his environment to his development level; rather than encouraging him to attempt motions that are more advanced.

4. The carrying out of these Factors will give him the opportunity of free rolling kicking quivering wriggling which means better muscle tone and structural balance to make the creeping step.

II

Through games, rhythmic equipment.

The sewer pipe that has lately been used in schools should have a floor as the concrete surface is not good for the child to be attempting balance upon.