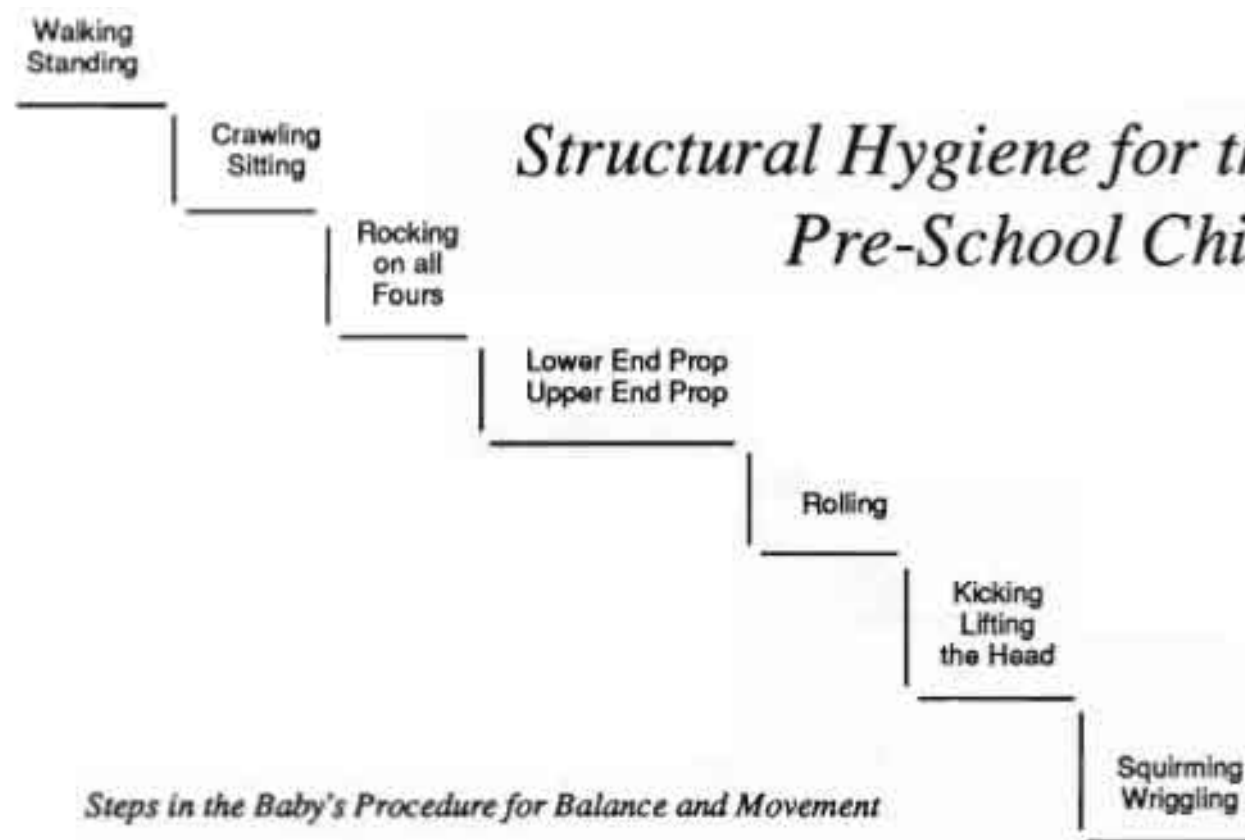


## *Structural Hygiene for the Pre-School Child*



In earliest life, every child is involved in discovering the best way to balance and move his body. The child's structure increases so rapidly in size and weight that problems of balance are ever with him. Nature helps at the start by letting his body rest in the easiest way, in the horizontal plane.

Squirming and wriggling are the first steps the baby takes to discover balance and movement. Squirming and wriggling, while lying on the front or back of the body, develops the strength and flexibility of the spine. Since he knows nothing of movement for the purpose of going somewhere, the baby is content in the snake-like action. The rhythmic delight of the movement pleases him as he balances his structure around the central axis—the spinal column.

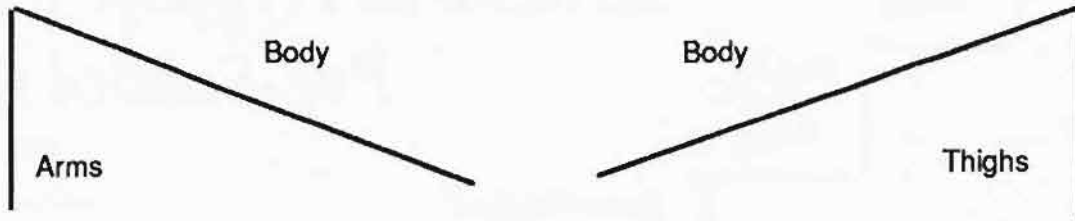
In the horizontal plane the baby also lifts his head, opens and shuts his hands and feet, waves his arms and legs in the air and kicks. He spends all of his time practicing coordination, showing such patience, perseverance and concentration. We would not interfere with the practice time of a musician and we should not interfere with the baby's.

The next step in the baby's development is rolling around his axis. The sides of the pelvis ment. Squirming and wriggling, while lying on the front or back of the body, develops the strength and flexibility of the spine. Since he knows nothing of movement for the purpose of going somewhere, the baby is content in the snake-like action. The rhythmic delight of the movement pleases him as he balances his structure around the central axis—the spinal column.

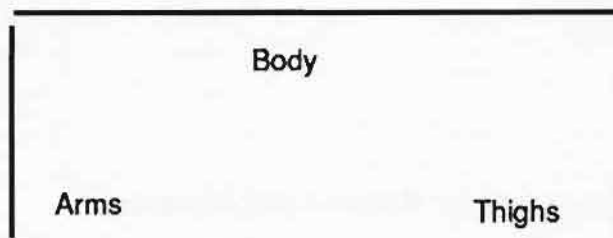
In the horizontal plane the baby also lifts his head, opens and shuts his hands and feet, waves his arms and legs in the air and kicks. He spends all of his time practicing coordination, showing such patience, perseverance and concentration. We would not interfere with the practice time of a musician and we should not interfere with the baby's.

The next step in the baby's development is rolling around his axis. The sides of the pelvis and the ribs provide a supporting framework for the spine as the baby rolls. The inner ends of

The baby uses the horizontal resting surface until he has explored all the ways of balancing on that plane. Next, he comes to the semi-horizontal planes.



By propping himself up on his arms or his thighs, the baby becomes familiar with a new means of support for the body a little at a time. This leads to the simultaneous support of the body by the thighs and arms in the crawling position.



The strength of the arms and thighs are developed in the rocking balances which the child first practices in this position. Although he seems not to know where he is going, he is best left unhindered until he develops his coordination. Gradually, he reaches his next step, the ability to sit in the vertical plane without support. A little later, he achieves the ability to use the crawling action. In crawling, with the spine supported at both ends in the horizontal plane, the arms and thighs are free to move in their sockets. The baby needs a safe room to crawl in, not a play pen. He needs to move much more than the few steps a play pen will allow. Let him enjoy exploring his world, feeling the objects he may encounter and learning from all he experiences.

Standing and walking bring the child into the vertical plane, a more difficult one in which to balance and move the body. To make this developmental step easily requires familiarity with the art of balance on all the lower steps.

Let your baby direct his own movement development. Get your ideas from him about appropriate forms of play. If he takes the lead, he won't overstimulate himself. Let his world, feeling the objects he may encounter and learning from all he experiences.

Standing and walking bring the child into the vertical plane, a more difficult one in which to balance and move the body. To make this developmental step easily requires familiarity with the art of balance on all the lower steps.

Let your baby direct his own movement development. Get your ideas from him about appropriate forms of play. If he takes the lead, he won't overstimulate himself. Let him decide when he wants to sit up. He won't try it too soon. Let him have free rein when ready to crawl and don't hold him back. Let him act when ready to stand, the urge

