

Every child in his earliest years is interested in discovering for himself, the easiest way in which to balance and move his body.

Baby gives his whole attention in the earliest weeks and months to feeling thro his body and finding what he has to work with.
2 (Provided clothes do not distract his attention)

He feels himself out by a squirming
3 wiggling process that brings concept of weight and how best to manage it.

He finds that he has a center (spinal column) that he can wiggle slightly side to side and up and down (snake fashion) (if bed is firm enough and does not sag).

He finds that he can best move an ^{weight} ~~arm~~ ^{rest} ~~weight~~ ^{rest} against this center. He finds that he can kick feet with a leg when it is ^{resting} ~~rested~~ against this center. He finds that he can hold his head when it rests on this center.

Explanation of Support and Movement in Horizontal Plane

The horizontal — position taken in the sideways roll gives a large base of support for the body. Since the heavy part of the body is directly supported by the floor the muscles are able to maintain the structure in good alignment; the spinal column is supported throughout its length, and the organic weight is distributed over a large base. A child's body proportions are especially adapted to the sideways roll. The head is large, the legs are short, the body rounded and the muscle structure very elastic. The action of turning the body in this position brings into use the deep muscles of the back, abdomen, thighs, and shoulders. It develops the muscles that make the back straight and strong and thereby lessens the tendency to lordosis (sway back), abdominal protuberance, uneven hips and shoulders, and poor head carriage.

What does play do for a child - physically

It is a well known fact that movement is essential to growth. We have always associated normal activity with the well strong child, and normal activity or movement to him means play.

The baby plays in the simplest way possible. His actions might be termed body plays. We understand finger plays where we see the definite action ^{with fingers}, very well. But if we ^{carefully} watch the baby play, we will see how when toes wiggle he has action throughout his whole body, or if he cries he cries all over, and so with every sort of expression of action, the whole body enters ^{into} the play and the result is a natural ^{strength} ^{of} rhythm throughout the body, the same as we find in the waves and in the air. He varies the time of this rhythm too according to how he wishes to express himself and the emphasis he wants to place upon it.

A little hunger and he has a slow action, very hungry and his action or time of rhythm is as rapid as the strength of his body permits. The purpose of the baby's play is to develop the bodily strength and he should be allowed to proceed as he knows best. For instance he first

understands that he must perfect himself in the
art of movement, with his body resting on a support.
Then having accomplished this physical feat he
proceeds to the next hardest, the semi-upright
or sitting position. Then comes the crawling, and
finally the standing position. This last, trying
to balance the body perpendicularly, is an
extremely difficult one, and no wonder that the
stomach and legs and portions of back, and
head, are often found on the wrong side of the
central line of balance. strength

If the child could keep the thoughts of the
whole ^{bodily} action as he does ^{when a} little baby then
he would not divide into parts which are difficult
to control mentally and which weaken the
muscular development of the body as a whole.
The human body illustrates well the principle
that in union there is strength. The small
baby has this unified principle and we need
to bend our attention to helping him keep
it. Proper diet, sufficient rest, right kind
of play, all contribute toward this end.