

PSYCHOLOGY

Learning To Stand Is Roundabout Process

Baby at Four Weeks Is in Better Position For Getting Up Than He Is Again for Next 40 Weeks

BABY, at four weeks old, lying in his characteristic position all curled up with his legs under his tummy, is in a more favorable position for getting up into an upright posture than he will be again until he is 44 weeks old.

During the intervening weeks, he goes through a regular pattern or progression of typical poses which carry him in a roundabout way through the squirming and crawling stages toward the perpendicular pose which distinguishes man from the lower mammals.

But after he is four weeks old, it is not again until he is nearly 11 months old that he again draws his legs up under him into the best position for getting upright. This curious indirection in development was pointed out to psychologists at the meeting of the American Psychological Association at Ann Arbor, Mich., by Dr. Helen Thompson, of Yale University.

"Nature appears to have followed a most inefficient plan," she commented. "Or is it that she has remodeled a primi-

tive structure? It would be of interest to make a comparable study of primate development to see if in the less highly organized animal the developmental process is a more direct one."

Dr. Thompson, working with Dr. Arnold Gesell, has made a detailed study, by observation and motion pictures, of the growth and development of normal healthy babies of typical middle-class families. A sort of time-table of the poses achieved by 50 per cent. or more of babies at various age levels has been worked out by Dr. Thompson.

Baby's Time Table

At four weeks the average baby can lift his head momentarily, but typically rests with back arched and knees and elbows drawn up under him. By eight weeks he can hold the head up for a period. At 16 weeks he can raise his upper chest. By 28 weeks he can raise himself up enough from the prone position to lift one arm. From that time on the arms are gradually brought back under the body until the chest and later the whole trunk can be raised up. Still the legs are not working right for crawling, so at this stage the baby frequently pushes himself backward in his efforts at crawling. When he is 44 weeks old, he can raise himself enough to push himself into a sitting position from being flat face down. By 48 weeks he can really creep. And when he is 56 to 60 weeks old, he is able to push himself up into a standing position without aid.

Development is Gradual

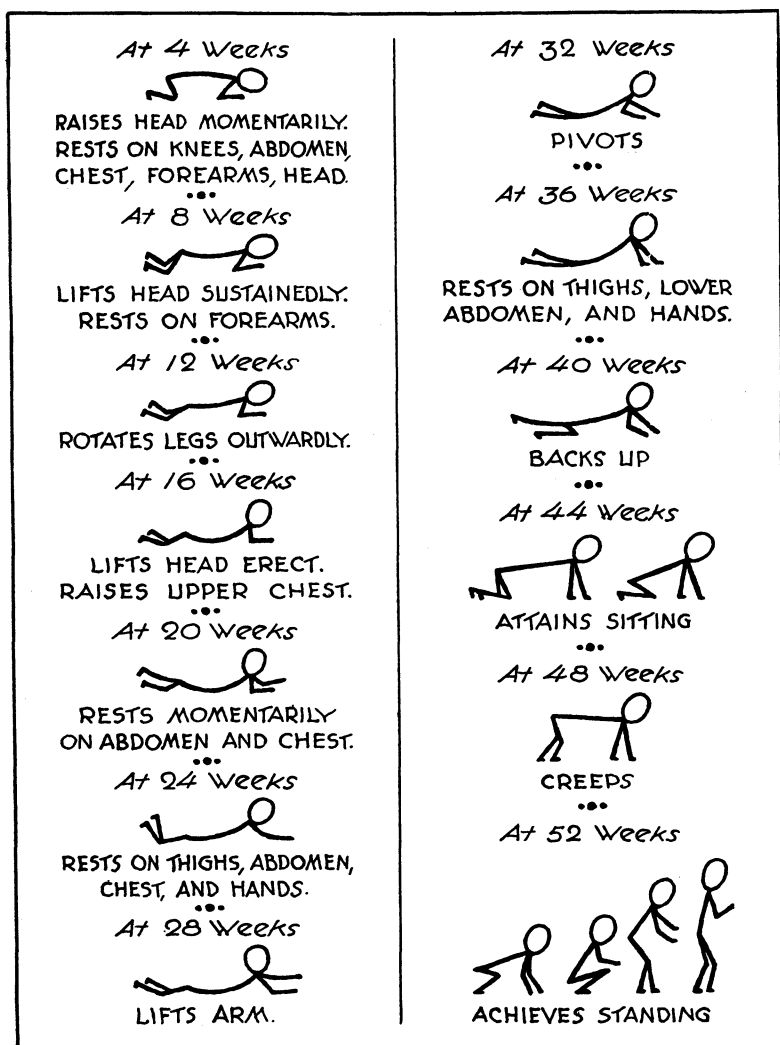
With help he can stand much earlier than that, being able to support his entire weight, so long as he is steadied, when he is only 32 weeks old and pulling himself to standing position with the help of a rail when he is only 48 weeks old. He can maintain himself in a pose much earlier than he is able to get into it himself unaided, Dr. Thompson found.

The ability to stand or to walk alone, which in some babies seems to come so suddenly, is really the outgrowth of a slow and gradual development of many factors, she pointed out. It is the hip joint that is the last to straighten out fully and complete the upright pose.

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The birds known as mound builders, in the East Indies, take no care of their young, babies hatch by heat of the sun and start flying after a day or two.

An Australian scientist is in Florida, seeking insect enemies of the cocklebur which can be used to fight American cocklebur now rampant in Australia.



WHAT A BABY CAN DO WHEN LAID FACE DOWN