

BabyGym and the Chinese Bamboo Tree

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I joined BabyGym with my eldest daughter Diya, just over three years ago. During one of our classes our BabyGym Instructor, Zharina Wajoodeen, told to us about the Chinese bamboo. It is now, 3 years later, that I truly understand the significance of this story:

In the Far East, there is a tree called the Chinese bamboo tree. This remarkable tree is different from most trees in that it doesn't grow in the usual fashion. While most trees grow steadily over a period of years, the Chinese bamboo tree doesn't break through the ground for the first four years. Then, in the fifth year, an amazing thing happens – the tree begins to grow at an astonishing rate. In fact, in a period of just five weeks, a Chinese bamboo tree can grow to a height of 90 feet. It's almost as if you can actually see the tree growing before your very eyes - *Eric Aronson*



The development of a baby's brain is very similar to the Chinese Bamboo Tree. For the first few years it is difficult to tell from the outside if development is taking place, but once your toddler starts to walk, talk and interact with you, you see the same amazing growth as the Chinese Bamboo Tree. Although it seems like all the growth happens at the same time, the first years are crucial- and determine the strength and complexity of the root system, and make the growth spurt possible.

I did BabyGym diligently with my little girl because I wanted to know if the Chinese Bamboo Tree theory was true for humans, and I am sure it is. Diya has an excellent memory, is socially very intuitive, listens, understands and based on the information she has gathered, makes sound judgement for a 3 year old. She started nursery school this year and her teacher is very pleased with her, she is confident and able to sit still and listen when required; something that is not a common occurrence for her age group. I have always been the mum who tries to do things faster and better, but I now also understand and appreciate the fact that faster is not always better. Baby needs time and many repetitions of the same movement, to reach physical milestones; and repetition over time develops the root system well!

So when my BabyGym Instructor, Zharina Wajoodeen, asked why I wanted to do BabyGym with my second child, the answer was simple, BabyGym works! I started BabyGym with my second daughter, Prisha, very soon after birth and doing BabyGym for the second time reminded me not only of the BabyGym massage and exercises but also refocused my thinking. I thought that I remembered everything, but the classes were just as informative and meaningful as the first time I joined BabyGym. Also, I unfortunately did not have the opportunity to do BabyGym when I was a baby, so my memory is not that great.

Initially I thought once your baby turned 1, the BabyGym exercises no longer applied, but I was glad to learn from Zharina that I can actually continue to apply BabyGym throughout my children's school careers. It has become a daily ritual to massage the ears, stretch the hands and calve muscles before they leave home for school!