

Developing baby's sense of balance develops baby's self-confidence

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David Beeker, being a rather large and heavy baby often had assisted seating from a very young age which allowed him limited motion or movement and reduced the opportunities for him to fight the pull of gravity. As a result he had very little confidence with new environments and would also become very unsure especially should he happen to lose his balance or have to move during a game. It was apparent that the lack of movement had hindered the strengthening of his core muscles and that his vestibular system (sense of balance) needed to be further stimulated and developed.

I learnt from BabyGym that he was still within the crucial window of opportunity for the physical development to be optimally developed (0- 14 months) so we spent a lot of time doing sit-ups and pull-ups. After each nappy change we only held down his knees and encouraged him to bring himself into a sitting position. We played many games bouncing on mum's lap while giving him only minimal support so that he could keep himself upright. We played a lot of swing games, lots of rolling in a blanket 'hammock' or being rolled up in a towel like a Swiss Roll; while always making sure to repeat the movement to both the left and the right side of the body. Dad also got involved and played 'rough' tumble games to expose David to bigger movements.

David is now a strong little boy able to keep his balance in most situations and is not intimidated by a changing or moving environment. He still loves to dance and will not pass an opportunity to play "Rugby" with Dad. The most noticeable difference in him is his confidence. He is able to control his body now- and the physical and emotional development as a result of this, is the most profound. Where the slightest change in environment or the slightest movement had him nervously crying and shrinking away, he is now a confident explorer.

The fact that there is a link between physical movement and emotional confidence (through the development of the vestibular and kinesthetic systems), should encourage us all to bin the walking-rings and cute baby seats.

Every movement experience counts towards baby's development, don't remove the opportunities by "helping" him.

