

CONCEPT OF PRE-NATAL PERIOD

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"Colostrum". At this stage, the weight of the foetus is about 2 kgs.

During 8th and 9th month, the colour of the skin of the foetus becomes red, soft ears develop. The foetal movements are felt and the mother's abdomen no longer enlarges and subsequently, the foetal movements are less often and less vigorous. At the end of the 9th month, the fully developed foetus occupies an inverted position in the uterus for delivery. The foetus is now 10-20 inches long and weighs about 3 kgs. Thus, a baby is born after 280 days or 9 months 10 days from conception.

1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF BABYHOOD :

Generally after one year, some specific changes in various aspects are seen among infants. During infancy, the child is totally dependent on others. As age advances, they become independent. Thus, along with physical and mental development, the infant gains control physically. At this age, the child is eager to know about his environment and thus the socialization process begins slowly. At the end of babyhood, the child starts using simple sentences combining three or four words. Such characteristics are seen among children of babyhood.

Elizabeth B. Hurloek described the characteristics of babyhood as follows -

These are explained briefly.

1. Babyhood is the true foundation age. Because at this time, the true foundation of their behaviour pattern, different attitudes and patterns of emotional expressions are established.

2. Babyhood is an age of rapid growth and change. At this stage, the physical and psychological growth becomes very rapid. This brings about a change in their appearance and capacities. Because, soon after birth, the upper position along with the head of the baby is relatively big as compared to the lower portion of the body. Changes in body proportions are seen along with growth in height and weight. The growth is very rapid at this age. Physical growth is accompanied by parallel growth and development of other aspects.

3. Babyhood is an age of decreasing dependency : As age advances, babies learn to control their body. They can sit, stand, walk and can climb stairs without help from others. Babies are able to communicate or can speak to others for their needs. Thus they become independent.

4. Babyhood is the age of increased individuality : Babyhood is known as the age of increased individuality. Babies grow and develop according to their interests and abilities.

Individuality appears in their appearance and in patterns of behaviour. As individuality increases, the necessity for identifying the baby as an individual is also increased. At this period, individual differences are seen among babies.

5. Babyhood is the beginning of socialization : Young babies become egocentric but very soon, they want to become a part of the social group. When babies are left alone, they try to protest.

6. Babyhood is the beginning of sex role typing : Soon after birth, boys are treated as boys and girls as girls. Therefore, boys are dressed up with blue colour and girls with pink colour to express their sex-role type.

7. Babyhood is an appealing age : Even though babies are disproportionate with their head, trunk and body portions, yet they are appealing with their big heads, protruding abdomen, small hands

and feet. When babies are helpless and dependent, adults find them more appealing.

8. Babyhood is the beginning of Creativity : Babies of this age are not able to control their environment and due to the lack of muscle co-ordination, they are unable to do any creative work. Thus, whatever they are doing lays the foundations for later creativity.

9. Babyhood is a hazardous age : There are hazards at every age of human life. Hurlock described babyhood as the most hazardous age. These hazards may be of two types- Physical and psychological. Among physical hazards, accidents, illness can create problems. Because these hazards may lead to physical disabilities or to death. If good behaviour patterns, attitudes, interests are not established during babyhood, this will result in psychological hazards.

SUMMARY

- Children become independent, when they acquire different skills, can distinguish right and wrong and can communicate properly.
- Growth and development continue even when the child is in mother's womb.
- The period from conception till child birth is known as pre-natal development.
- There are three stages of pre-natal development-period of ovum, period of embryo and period of foetus.
- There are some specific characteristics of babyhood.