

A Thirty-Six Weeks Behavior Day

YALE FILMS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
A THIRTY-SIX WEEKS BEHAVIOR DAY
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DEVELOPMENT
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As the infant grows older, the cycle of his daily behavior changes. This boy is now 36 weeks old; he sleeps about 18 hours out of 24.

SIX O'CLOCK: WAKING AND FEEDING

As soon as he awakes, he begins to exercise his many maturing patterns of behavior. Play is indeed the infant's work. This boy is resourceful, he is not over dependent. He plays contentedly by himself, after he's had his morning cup of milk. Through all this rolling, kicking, grasping, transferring, waving, and attentive inspecting, he is steadily developing increased motor control.

NINE O'CLOCK: BATH

He is now getting ready for his bath. In his time, he has already had 250 baths, and he is looking forward to the next one with pleasant anticipation. He likes the sitting position and in that position, the mother now places him in the tub. At first, he is absorbed and watching every move his mother makes. But he is incessantly busy. Babies have a way of doing many different kinds of things in a short space of time. We ourselves would hardly think up everything a baby needs for his mental growth, so he constantly surprises us with what he can do on his own initiative.

The bath is an especially good educational experience. It brings so many reactions into play: emotional reactions, social responses, postural reactions, experimentation and ceaseless exploitation.

Here he is when he was only 12 weeks of age. He could not sit alone, he could not reach, he could not even splash. But now at 36 weeks of age he can splash and reach and grasp and hold tenaciously. And he is determined to secure the floating swan. He has his difficulties, they arise out of the fact that he cannot creep and reach at the same time. So the swan eludes him. He can sit alone but he cannot creep, yet! This may be discouraging to us for the time being, but not to him. He is remarkably good-natured and persevering. Infants in fact, have great powers of concentration. Relative to their abilities, they often show more concentration than adults. And persistence has its reward. The prize at last is captured.

This is an industrious infant, never idle. When his mother's locket is in reach, he exploits that. He hasn't the dimmest idea that it dangles by a chain, which hangs about her neck, and that she has a neck just as he has one. He has no notion of his own neck. He knows very little about the spatial relationships of the physical world, but he is learning. He kicks, vigorously, for spontaneous exercise. Take notice however, that he stops kicking when his garment is applied; this is something he has already learned.

TEN O'CLOCK: FEEDING

He is also learning to eat with a spoon. No one of course expects a baby to handle a spoon all by himself at this tender age. But this mother believes in letting him do whatever he can and whatever he will to feed himself independently. Nor do we expect all mothers to use precisely the same training methods. This two-spoon method, which you've just seen, is a bit novel, but it may have some educational value after all. Likewise the dog, who is committed to make a visit when breakfast is well over and out of harm's way. The dog then goes off for a philosophical stroll, and the baby is off for a nap of 4 hours. We cannot picture the chemical mechanisms of growth, which operate while the infant sleeps.

ONE O'CLOCK: DINNER

But we know that when he wakes, he must be replenished. This time he is replenished with mashed baked potato, egg, cereal, and the always indispensable milk. Milk, the perfect food for infants. Note the thoroughness of the mother and the adaptability of the infant to her ministrations. What does he say with his grim grimaces and with his smile?

And now for a nap, but a shorter one, and again out-of-doors. The weather is cold enough for mittens but it is wise to give a growing infant as much fresh air as possible, both night and day. You notice again that he wakes slowly, he is self-contained, good-natured, knows how to amuse himself, doesn't cry when he is left alone. Nonetheless, he is delighted to see his mother again when she comes into view. The consistency and the warmth of her care for him must have a cumulatively favorable influence on his social development.

Late afternoon is the favorite period for vigorous play. And once more, the floor offers unexcelled opportunity for the improvement of motor control. We are about to witness the very first successful creeping efforts ever observed in this boy. It is therefore an unusual cinema record. He can roll from his back to his stomach and he tries to crawl forward, flat on his stomach, but in vain. Now however he assumes a creeping position. This is a new pattern of behavior: he falls forward, he contacts this ball, and once again, he adopts a creeping stance and manages to advance upon the ball: his first creeping. The lure of the ball is obvious. For infants and for the grown man alike, the ball is the supreme toy.

SIX O'CLOCK: SUPPER

The day is nearly done. The father has returned from his work and again, lends a hand in the important affairs of the domestic day. And you will agree, it is an efficient hand. Babies acquire habits, but they have a rich capacity for adaptability. You see with what almost knowing patience, this baby responds to the special requirements which his father demands. Father and son are beginning to understand each other. We should not ask which feeding you like best, whether the father's or the mother's, each has its points. Fortunately, the baby's appetite remains strong in both situation. This is his fourth meal. At each one, he has had milk to drink. And so to bed, he accepts the close of the day content, he makes no fuss when left alone and in a few minutes he is sound asleep. The day is done but for 12 continuous hours in the depth of sleep, the mysterious chemistry of growth builds its subtle network, and he wakes on the morrow a child more mature.

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Transcription: Loïse Poinso