

Babies Remember Birth

Feature – David B. Chamberlain, Ph.D.

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Talking Points

- ❖ Author David Chamberlain, Ph.D. opens up with this handful of questions, "What do you see when you look at a newborn baby, bright-eyed, gazing straight at you? Is there really a person there? Silently frowning or beet-red with rage, can this baby think and feel? For its small size a newborn makes a powerful, compelling noise, but is it actually saying anything?" (16)
- ❖ Babies who were described as "incapable, subhuman, pre-human, dull and senseless, and treated as such" now have new research to refute this. Top researchers now sing the praises of infants as being talented, precocious, amazing, and extremely competent.
- ❖ Babies are constantly picking up information and learning from their experiences. What are some things you see them learning everyday? For example, "After only minutes of repeated exposure to its mother's face after birth, a baby can pick her out from a gallery of photos... Consider how smoothly the senses are coordinated at birth: eyes turn with the head in the direction of a sound; hands go up to protect eyes from bright light; the first time at the breast, the baby knows how to suckle and breathe in perfect synchrony; they shriek and pull away from a heel lance." (17)
- ❖ New technological techniques (scanning electron microscope, fiber optics and special lenses, ultrasound imaging, etc.) have been able to give us a new understanding of life before birth as well. These new discoveries have been able to give us a new understanding of their many talents/abilities.
- ❖ An example of some of the information gained is that "After only eight weeks of gestation, stroking the baby's cheeks with a fine hair produces consistent reactions indicating that tactile sensitivity has already been established." (18) Babies are already learning before birth.
- ❖ All of these scientific findings are only verifying what many people have known all along: newborns are real people with real abilities. They are social beings that are able to "form close relationships, express themselves forcefully, exhibit preferences, and begin influencing people from the start. They are capable of integrating complex information from many sources and, with a little help from their friends, begin regulating themselves and their environment." (18)

- ❖ Some startling myths about newborns:
 - Babies don't feel, they have very poor brains
 - They have an "assembly-line brain," meaning it's not expected to work until the last parts are installed
 - Babies can't think
 - They have no sense of self
 - The age myth, that generally younger means lower status, that it will become a person at a later time. We all know babies are much more capable than this.

Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

About David Chamberlain and a list of his publications:

<https://birthpsychology.com/person/david-b-chamberlain#.VHtd4THF98E>

About the Association for Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health:

<https://birthpsychology.com/content/what-apppah#.VHtd4THF98E>

APPPAH FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/birthpsychology/>

A great short clip from Joseph Chilton Pearce on this topic: <http://ttfuture.org/jcp/front>