

CONCEPT OF INFANCY PERIOD



For B.A. Education (Semester III)

Paper- II (Child Development)

Unit – II

By: MOHD ALI

Department of Education

Shia P.G. College

Lucknow

CONCEPT OF INFANCY PERIOD

Meaning and Concept:

As we all know that Infancy is the first stage after birth and goes upto 2 years, a child goes through the various stages in his full life such as infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and lastly old age. This is the beginning period for a child and considered as fastest period.

The word Infancy derived from **Latin *Infantem*** means "**not able to speak," from in "not", fari "to speak"** .

Infancy period is defined in many areas, the first two weeks are known as neonates. The first two years of an individual's life are the time of his most rapid development. Although every child develops at its own rate, each grows up in an orderly and predictable pattern. Cephalocaudally means the development takes place from head to tail and proximodistally means from trunk to extremes. They have usually wrinkled blocky red skin and a large head. They sleep for about 18 to 22 hours a day. During six months age infants can discriminate between faces of parents and strangers, and colours. By one year of age, babies can associate sounds and say dada, mama or bye-bye and at the age of two years, baby cooperates with others especially adults and latter with his playmates. Parents have a profound influence in shaping their personality.

The behaviour and ability of 2-year-old infants are different from that of older children. The two-year-old infants can eat, cry, move, babble, play, kick, and smile. Two-year-old children has the absence of qualities such as the ability to speak, to act with intention, to reason, to be self-conscious, and to experience the emotion of guilty, empathy and pride. Psychologists like *Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget* highlighted a different aspect of an infant because each was loyal to assumptions that were part of the larger cultural context in which they lived.

Characteristics of Infancy stage:

The characteristics of infancy period are as follows:

- **Shortest period of whole life-span:** The infancy period is the shortest period of whole life-span of all the developmental stages. It starts from birth to two years. This is the time when foetus comes into the world from the mother's womb where he lives almost nine critical months.
- **Rapid Growth and development:** There is rapid growth in terms of height, weight and size. There is also rapid development of emotions and almost all the motor activity and restlessness.

- **Dependence:** At this stage, a child depends upon his mother, father and other family members for the satisfaction of his basic needs. He is a helpless creature and can move and function only with the help of others.
- **Emotionally unstable:** It is the period of violent emotional experiences. Emotions at this stage are marked by intensity, frequency and instability. They are spontaneous and the infant is hardly able to exercise control over them. He is not capable of hiding his feelings and in this way, the emotional expression of the infant is generally in the overt form.
- **Rapidity in Mental Potentiality:** at infancy stage the mental development of the child is very rapid.
- **Tendency of repetition:** during infancy stage there is very prominent tendency of repetition that is whatever child learn he repeats again and again.
- **Expression of emotions:** The commonly expressed emotions during infancy are love, affection, fear, anger and grief.
- **Rapidity in learning process:** At this stage the learning process is very rapid and infant learn with very fast pace and permanent.
- **Instinctive behaviour:** Most of the behaviour of infant is instinctive in nature that is based on basic instinct.
 - For example, A infant irritate on being hungry
 - A child laugh on being happy
- **Adjustment:** It is equally important to the infant as he has to adjust with the outer surroundings. Most of the infants complete their adjustment period in two weeks or less than two weeks. In infants whose birth has been difficult or premature require more time for adjustment.
- Infancy period is a **plateau in development.** The growth and development which took place during the prenatal period suddenly come to a stop with birth. Infant loses weight after birth, is less healthy compared to what it was at the time of birth. At the end of this period infant again starts gaining weight.
- **Period of full hazards:** Infancy is considered as period of hazards in terms of physical and psychological adjustment. Physical adjustment to the new

environment is difficult for the child. The attitudes of the family members create more difficult situation for the infant.

- **Period of future prediction:** Bell, R.Q. et. al. (1971) suggested that infancy is period of future prediction as We can start some future prediction about the infant. Some activities show the prediction of development. It is a preview of later development.

Adjustments during infancy:

As we discussed above infants have to make certain important adjustments after birth. They have to make these changes quickly for their better development. If they are not able to effect those changes, they may face some problems regarding their adjustment. Even they may regress to a lower stage of development. There are four major adjustments during infancy period, which are described below:

1. Temperature changes: There is a constant temperature of 100 degree F in the uterine sac, while temperature in the hospital or home may vary from 60 to 70 degree F.

2. Breathing: When the umbilical cord is cut, infant must begin to breathe on its own.

3. Sucking and Swallowing: The infant must now get nourishment by sucking and swallowing, instead of receiving it through the umbilical cord. These reflexes are imperfectly developed at birth, and the infant often gets less nourishment than is needed and thus loses weight.

4. Elimination: The infant's organs of elimination begin to work soon after birth. Earlier, the waste products were eliminated through the umbilical cord.

Developmental Tasks during Infancy stage:

The terms and concept regarding developmental tasks were first introduced by Robert **Havighurst** of the University of Chicago, USA by a definition given below:

"Developmental task is one which arises at a certain period in the life of the individual, successful accomplishment of which leads to his happiness and success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness and difficulty with later tasks. "

Havighurst, 1972

The developmental period, as we know in the human beings ranges from birth to the attainment of maturity, i.e. expiry of the adolescence period. The significant stages of development during this period may be named as the stages of infancy, childhood and adolescence. Let us try to know something about the nature of development tasks needed to be performed by the infants during infancy stage.

Development tasks of infancy (up to two years):

- Learning to crawl, stand, walk, run, climb, jump, throw etc.
- Learning to drink and take solid food
- Learning to talk
- Learning to acquire physiological stability
- Learning to control elimination of bodily wastes
- Learning to explore the physical environment surrounding him
- Learning to play with toys
- Learning to accomplish the skill of tri-cycling
- Learning to pay attention towards the things, persons and events
- Learning to recognize and identify things and persons
- Forming simple concepts of social and physical reality
- Learning to recite poems and stories
- Learning to imitate the behaviour and actions of others
- Learning to acquire almost all the positive and negative emotions in his behaviour expression
- Learning to shift his attention from the play material to his playing mates
- Learning to take interest in the company of his age mates and other
- Learning to relate oneself emotionally to parents, sibling and others.

Nature of Education in Infancy:

As we all know that the lap of mother is the first school for rearing and development of new born child, at this stage the infants are unable to go to school, so we should give education in informal way for proper development :

- 1. Provision of proper environment:** There should be proper environment for infants for physical, mental, emotional and social development of child. The parents should have affectionate behaviour toward their children and the environment should be peaceful.
- 2. Good habit formation:** By creating right atmosphere around the child, they should taught good habits

3. Encouragement and guidance for basic instincts

4. Training in hygienic and healthy habits: Training such as dressing, toilet habits, eating, washing, cleaning etc.

5. Activity based education: Informally, The children or infant should be educated on the basis of principles of learning by doing and activity-based education. For example, Play-way method, Montessori method, Kindergarten method etc.

6. Development of good physique: It includes

- **Development of motor skills.**
- **Development and coordination of the muscles**

7. Opportunity for self-expressions: At this stage children have a natural tendency to their own thoughts and feelings. For example wood and clay work may be identified as creativity of children.

8. Moral and character development: There should be proper social environment for moral and character development of infants

9. Mental development: As we know that there are very rapid mental development takes place at this stage, so proper opportunity should be given to children.

- We should try to practiced reading and writing in simple way
- Infants can be taught many useful things like stories, songs, rhymes etc.