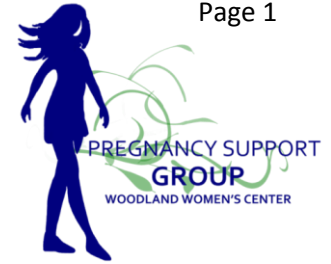


Life Support



Babies can recognize faces while still in the womb, scientists find

From The Telegraph, www.telegraph.co.uk, by Sarah Knapton

Here is a nice little study. It just goes to show what an amazing job God did when He designed the beginnings of life in the womb.

Babies can recognize faces while still in the womb, new research suggests.

Incredible moving images of unborn infants before their birth, shows that they turn their heads towards shapes which resemble faces - with the position of eyes and nose picked out.

But when they see a random shape, they ignore it, scientists at Lancaster University have found.

The finding suggests that the instinct to recognise facial features develops before a baby has even see its first face.

It also shows that an unborn baby's senses are already well developed and parents should begin interacting with their child while it is still in the womb.

Professor Vincent Reid, a psychologist at Lancaster University who led the research: "The foetus in the third trimester actively seeks out information.

"In our study they had to move their head to keep looking at the face-like stimulus when we moved it away from them. So they are active participants in finding information from the environment. What this means is that other ways of interacting with the fetus can be considered.

"The foetus in the third trimester can hear very well. I would encourage expecting parents to read books out loud to each other. This can help with bonding and could be beneficial."

The researchers shone dots of light arranged to look either like the eyes and mouth of a human face through the uterus wall of 39 expectant mothers who were 34 weeks (8 months) pregnant.

Babies after birth are known to prefer looking at dots of light arranged in this shape.

The scientists used computer modelling to see how the light would change as it passes through the mother's skin and abdomen so they could produce the same arrangement of light.

Their study, which is published in the journal Current Biology, showed that when this face-like image was projected through the uterus, the babies turned their heads to look at it.

When a similar arrangement of light that was used to make the face look upside down, and so harder to recognise as a face, the fetuses did not react.

Dr Reid added: "We know from babies that they prefer to look at faces more than any other stimulus.

"We have now shown that the foetus can distinguish between

different shapes, preferring to track face-like over non-face-like shapes.

"The newborn has very poor visual acuity so the fetus will have a similarly poor ability to focus. So whatever the fetus sees is likely to be blurry."

When a baby is born it automatically recognises faces

May 2017 Outreach

New Clients	4
Births	9
+ve Pregnancy Tests	1
-ve Pregnancy Tests	0
Diapers	660

Professor Reid said this could happen because the foetus is hardwired to recognise human faces or the way light falls in the womb primes it to recognise these sorts of "face-like" shapes.

He said: "I think the second option is more likely. I believe that it is likely this bias to look at faces is triggered by exposure to patterned light in the womb and is due to prenatal visual experiences.

"It is possible that the maternal rib cage could introduce variation in light penetrating the womb and this may be enough visual information to create this bias.

• To view the original article from *The Telegraph*, please visit: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2017/06/08/babies-can-recognise-faces-still-womb-scientists-find/>

"It suggests that the upper visual fields - typically the top half of whatever you are looking at - is developmentally more advanced and sensitive than the lower visual fields."

If correct, the findings suggest that exposure to light while in the womb could be just as important to the development of our eyes as it is after we are born.

Professor Reid warned that expecting mothers should avoid shining bright lights through their abdomen in case they damage their unborn child's eyes.

THANK YOU!!!

The Pregnancy Support Group's 17th Annual Fundraiser was a huge blessing to us! Thank you to all who supported us, especially our gracious sponsors!

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