

# Study shows sitting up helps babies learn

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(Medical Xpress)—A new study by Rebecca J. Woods, assistant professor in the human development and family science department at North Dakota State University, shows sitting up, whether by themselves or with assistance, is a critical part of how babies learn.

The paper, "[Posture](#) Support Improves [Object](#) Individuation in Infants," has been published in [Developmental Psychology](#).

Woods' study shows babies' ability to sit up unsupported has a profound effect on their ability to learn about objects. It also shows that when babies who cannot sit up alone are given posture support, such as from a Bumbo™ seat, they learn as well as babies who can already sit alone.

Woods explained that an important part of human cognitive development is the ability to understand whether an object in view is the same or different from an object seen earlier.

Through two experiments, she confirmed that 5.5 and 6.5 month olds don't use patterns to differentiate objects on their own but that 6.5 month olds can be primed to use patterns if they have the opportunity to look at, touch and mouth the objects before being tested.

An advantage the 6.5 month olds may have is the ability to sit unsupported, which makes it easier for babies to reach for, grasp and manipulate objects. If babies don't have to focus on balancing, their attention can be on exploring the object.

In a third experiment, 5.5 month olds were given full postural support while they explored objects. When they had posture support, they were able to use patterns to differentiate objects.

"Helping a baby sit up in a secure, well-supported manner during learning sessions may help them in a wide variety of learning situations, not just during object-feature learning," Woods said. "This knowledge can be advantageous particularly to infants who have cognitive delays who truly need an optimal [learning environment](#)."

The study also suggests that delayed sitting may cause [babies](#) to miss [learning](#) experiences that affect other areas of development.

**More information:** [psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2012-26984-001/](https://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2012-26984-001/)

Provided by North Dakota State University

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