

## **The Importance of Tummy Time in Infant Development**

Tummy time, the practice of placing infants on their stomachs while they are awake and supervised, is essential for early motor and sensory development. Research indicates that regular tummy time is linked to improvements in gross motor skills, the prevention of positional conditions, and enhanced psychomotor development (Zachry & Kitzmann, 2011).

### **Key Benefits of Tummy Time**

#### Gross Motor Development

- A systematic review by Hewitt et al. (2020) found that tummy time is positively associated with gross motor milestones such as rolling, crawling, and reaching. Infants who engage in consistent tummy time demonstrate stronger neck, shoulder, and core muscles, which are crucial for later movement and coordination.

#### Prevention of Positional Conditions

- Tummy time plays a key role in preventing positional plagiocephaly (flat head syndrome) and brachycephaly, conditions caused by excessive time spent lying on the back (Hewitt et al., 2020). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends incorporating tummy time throughout the day to reduce the risk of these conditions (AAP, 2021).

#### Psychomotor Development

- Research on infants between 6 and 9 months old showed that tummy time enhances psychomotor development, with 62.5% of infants reaching expected developmental milestones after increased tummy time interventions (Susanto & Zahro, 2022). This suggests that early engagement in tummy time can contribute to long-term developmental progress.

#### Dr. Allie Turner's Capstone Project

- Dr. Allie Turner, OTD, OTR/L, conducted a capstone project titled "Examining the Benefits of Educating Caregivers About Tummy Time in the Acute Care Setting". Her study focused on the impact of educating parents about tummy time in hospital environments, emphasizing the role of occupational therapy in promoting early developmental play. The project highlighted that providing caregivers with proper tummy time education can lead to more consistent implementation, supporting infants' long-term developmental outcomes.

Tummy time is a fundamental practice for infant development, supporting motor skills, preventing positional conditions, and enhancing psychomotor progress. Research and projects like Dr. Turner's highlight the importance of caregiver education in ensuring that tummy time is effectively integrated into daily routines.

## References

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