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Watch the video “Prenatal Development” below and then answer the following questions:

What is a teratogen? How can these affect prenatal development? Why is the period of gestation in humans so long? Why do psychologists’ study prenatal development?

Teratogen comes from the Greek word teratogen that means monster, and gen that means producing. The word teratogen literally means “monster producing.” Anything that can negatively affect a fetus can be consider a teratogen. A fetus or embryo can be exposed to teratogen through their mother and this can cause the fetus to develop malformation.

Whatever the mother eats or drinks has an impact on the fetus. whatever is in the mother blood stream, is also in the fetus. One of the results of a fetus that has been exposed to these terrible substances is that they can be born smaller and earlier than expected. Others can include disrupted development, birth defects, psychological defects, functional disorders, etc. Teratogen is the consumption of Alcohol, tobacco, certain drugs, etc., while pregnant.

Teratogen can also affect the development of the brain. The brain is an organ that needs a lot of time to be completely developed. It needs to be fully equipped and wired to learn all the things that a human need to know to survive. That’s one of the reasons the period of gestation in human is so long.

Prenatal development is very important for psychologist to study. That lays the foundation of the human function and development throughout their entire life. Also, prenatal development study would facilitate to understanding the how and why of some human behaviors.

How and when does the process of birth commence? What are the various elements of labor and delivery? What has to happen for birth to occur?

It all begins with a zygote, a fertilized egg that contains chromosome from both, the sperm and the egg. The zygote starts to divide into millions of cells. After two weeks the zygote travels to the fallopian tube where it gets implanted in the uterine wall. By the week eight, ninety-five percent of the structure and organs are completely formed. Week nine is the fetal period.

The fetus increases in size rapidly over the last three months of pregnancy, digestive and respiratory system matures and the production of neurons also increases. The fetus increases in size and the systems and organs continue developing, especially the brain. In the ninth month the baby is ready to exit the womb. The mother starts to feel contractions that will make the cervix to open and to allow the baby to move into the birth canal.

There are different methods to deliver the baby for example, natural childbirth. In this case the mother and her partner are taught to use breathing methods and relaxation techniques during delivery. Another method is cesarean where the baby is removed from the uterus through an incision made in the mother's abdomen. Water birth is another technique where

labor or delivery or both happen in a pool of warm water. When the baby is out, birth has occurred.

Discuss the pros and cons of breast- versus bottle-feeding.

For the first six months to two years of life breast feeding is the best option to nourish a baby; it is better than using a bottle. Some of the benefits of breast feeding include:

Appropriate weight gain and reduced risk of child and adult obesity; fewer gastrointestinal infections; fewer respiratory tract infections; maturation of the infant's immune system which provide defenses for fighting off diseases; reduced risk of developing a fever in the first six months of their lives; higher cardiovascular fitness in children from four to eighteen years of age. However recent studies did find out that breast feeding was associated with a very small increase in children's intelligence.

Benefits of breast feeding for the mothers include reduced rates of breast cancer and ovarian cancer, as well as reduced rates of hospitalization for cardiovascular problems and diabetes.

How would you explain the importance of reflexes and their development, to a friend?

Reflexes are genetically carried survival mechanism that are automatic and involuntary. They allow infants to respond to their environment before they have had the opportunity to learn. Some the reflexes include coughing, sneezing, blinking, shivering, yawning. These reflexes persist throughout life. Other reflexes like sucking, tonic neck, rooting disappear several months after birth. In short, the reflexes are survival mechanism that allows the infant to protect themselves and survive.

Indicate and explain the individual differences in attachment and the relationship of early attachment to later social interactions.

Attachment is a close emotional bond between two people. Babies can get attached with the person that provide them with food, like their mother. They also can become attached with the caregiver that provides them with comfort. It is not just the person who feed them, but also the person that is physically and emotionally close and comfortable. A child that develops a healthy attachment with caregivers in their childhood is more likely to be stable and secure when it comes to form new relationships in the adulthood.

Compare and contrast fathers' and mothers' ability to care for infants, and each parent's typical caregiving practices.

Observations on fathers and their infants suggest that fathers can respond as sensitively as mothers with their infants. Maternal interaction usually centers on child-care activities-feeding, changing diaper, and bathing. Paternal interactions are more likely to include play, especially rough-and-tumble play. Nonetheless, mothers engage with play with their children three times as often as fathers do, and mothers and father play differently with children. Fathers bounced infants, throw them in the air, tickle them and so on. Mother's play is less physical and arousing than that of fathers.

If you were a parent who could choose whether to stay home with your children or place them in day care, what factors would you consider in making this decision?

If I were a parent, I would try to do my best to stay home with my children. Staying home will allow me to spend time with them, play with them, meeting their needs on time, making sure they are healthy and safe, making sure they feel supported etc. If for some reason I would need someone to take care of my children for some time, I would choose someone known for the family. For example, a family member like my parents my spouse's parents. If no family member is available, I would hire someone to come to my place and take care of the children at home. The best thing I can do for my children and I is to take care of them myself.