

YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICAL DEFECTS



*Lesson Material on Care of
the Preschool Child
No. 2*



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What are physical defects?

The most common physical defects found in children from 2 to 5 years of age are decayed teeth, poor nutrition (10 per cent underweight or 20 per cent overweight), diseased or too large tonsils and adenoids, and bad posture. Imperfect eyesight, poor hearing, skin trouble, and heart or lung disease are found also but not quite so often. By the time a child is 6 years old he may have one or more of these or other physical defects.

Why is it harmful to postpone correction of physical defects?

The body is like a very complicated piece of machinery. We all know that a fine watch, though damaged, sometimes will go but will not keep good time. If it is not repaired it keeps worse and worse time and perhaps finally stops. A little child's body is much like the watch, except that if correction of his physical defect is put off too long it may not be possible to do a complete repair job, and the defect can not be wholly corrected. His body machine may be so damaged that it will never again be able to work to the best advantage.

What may happen if physical defects are not corrected?

If the child's tonsils are in a bad condition an infection can spread up the throat and through the little tube connecting the throat with the inside of the ear. This may make its appearance in a discharge or running at the ears, and deafness may be the final result. Bad tonsils may account for frequent attacks of sore throat or tonsillitis, and tonsillitis may produce heart trouble, or an attack of rheumatism in the joints, or a long spell of "growing pains," which really are a kind of rheumatism. Enlarged tonsils and adenoids may interfere with breathing and so prevent the lungs from getting all the air they require.

Decayed teeth are likely to be sore, and so the child may fail to chew his food properly and thus may not get sufficient nourishment. Toothaches tire him. Gumboils may form around broken decayed teeth, and the poison from the pus, or matter, in the gumboils filters into the child's blood. This can make him feel tired all the time, can keep him from gaining properly in weight, and may make him subject to serious illness.

Problems.

1. Why should tonsils and adenoids ever be removed?
2. Why should the first teeth ever be filled?
3. Does your child have "growing pains"?
4. What other problems occur to you in relation to possible physical defects in your child?

References.

Child Care—The Preschool Age, pages 55, 56, 60, 62, 64. United States Children's Bureau Publication No. 30. Washington, 1925.

Standards for Physicians Conducting Conferences in Child-Health Centers, pages 2-3. United States Children's Bureau Publication No. 154. Washington, 1926.

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