

Brazelton Neonatal Test Encyclopedia Article

Brazelton Neonatal Test

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Brazelton Neonatal Test

One of the most extensive techniques available for assessment of newborns.

Developed by psychologist **T. Berry Brazelton** (1918-) in 1979, the Brazelton Neonatal Test is also known as the Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale (NBAS), or Brazelton Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale (BNBAS). The test is administered when an infant is three days old and again a few days later to check the accuracy of the initial assessment. It is useful not only for assessing an infant's status and detecting any neurological impairment but also as a way for parents to learn more about their newborns and become more effective in aiding their development. Examiners evaluate 20 different reflexes and record the newborn's responses to 26 stimuli and situations including lights, the sound of a rattle, and cuddling. Also assessed are capacities such as attention; orientation to face and voice; ability to be soothed and comforted; smoothness of transitions from one state to another (from crying to alertness, for example); and coordination of motor responses. The NBAS has been used in research to show variance among newborns. In addition, long-term studies that follow one infant from **birth** to preschool age have shown that many traits of the newborn remain stable throughout early childhood. Thus, the Brazelton test has enhanced appreciation by both parents and professionals of each infant as a unique individual. In addition, by watching a skilled tester work with a newborn, parents can learn a great deal about their babies and about how to interact with them.

For Further Study

Books

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Walsh, W. Bruce, and Nancy E. Betz. *Tests and Assessment*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

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Kosova, Weston. "Touchpoints." *Newsweek* 129, Spring-Summer 1997, p. 22.