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## Keep Calm and Carry On: Infant Carrying Practices and Motor Development

Mariah Clanton

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas, [clanton@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:clanton@unlv.nevada.edu)*

Alyssa Crittenden

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas, [alyssa.crittenden@unlv.edu](mailto:alyssa.crittenden@unlv.edu)*

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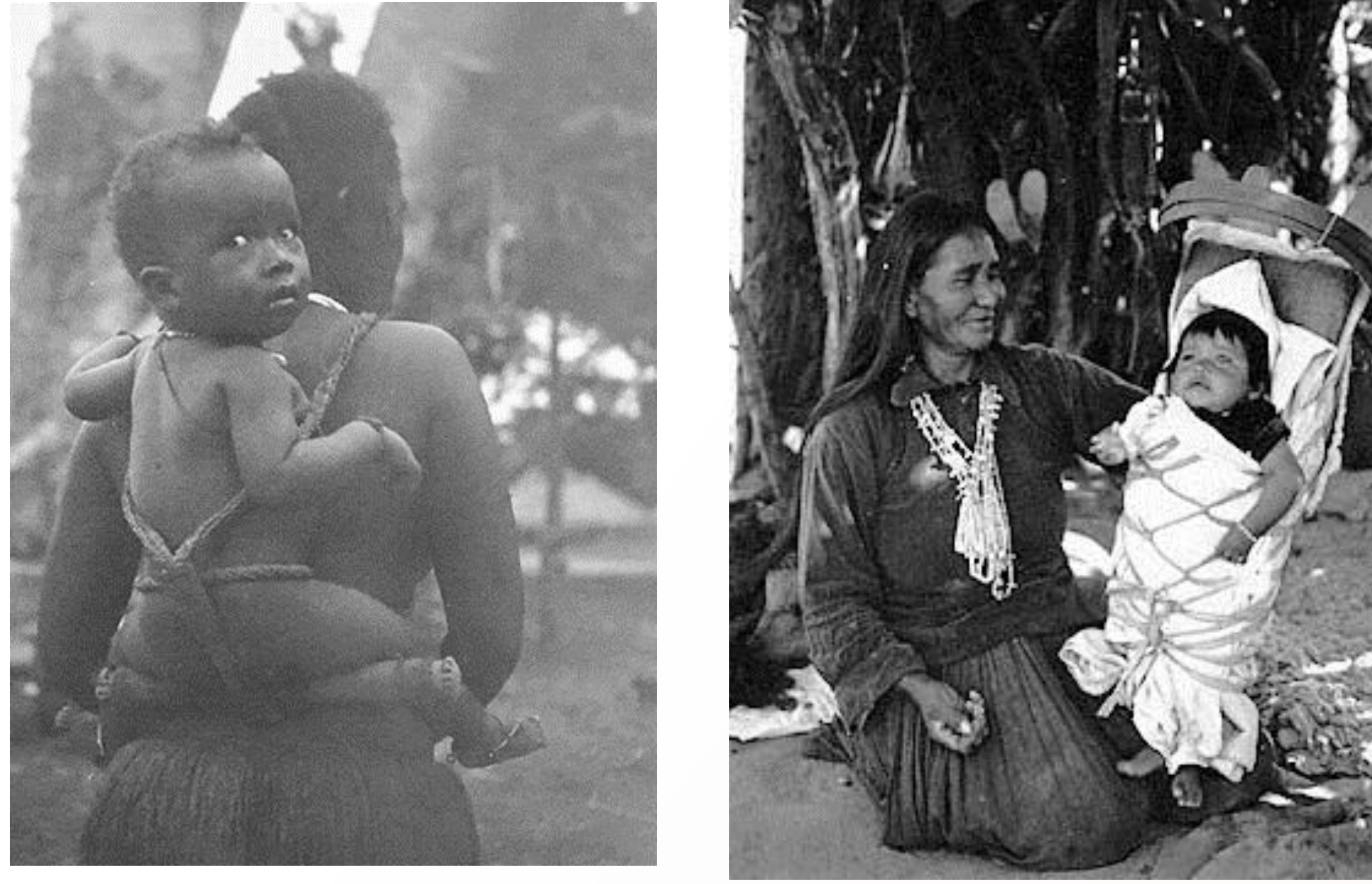
# Keep Calm and Carry On: Infant Carrying Practices and Motor Development

AANAPISI

Mariah Clanton, Senior, Anthropology  
Dr. Alyssa Crittenden, Associate Professor

### Why is Research on Infant Carrying Important?

- Increase of infants in the post-industrialized west diagnosed with conditions such as plagiocephaly or torticollis
- Postural deformities and delays can be corrected with positioning and interaction
- Few studies have explored infant carrying practices
- First comprehensive cross-cultural literature review
- Connection between infant transport/restraint & motor development
- To aid parents in the cultural west in the understanding how infant transport and securing devices can exacerbate postural deformities
- Altering infant restraint, transport or sleeping positions can mitigate some of the symptoms of such conditions



### Method

- Data from the online database for eHRAF World Cultures
- Infant carrying cross referenced with motor milestones
- Includes 31 culture groups
- Patterns emerged between carrying practice and motor development.

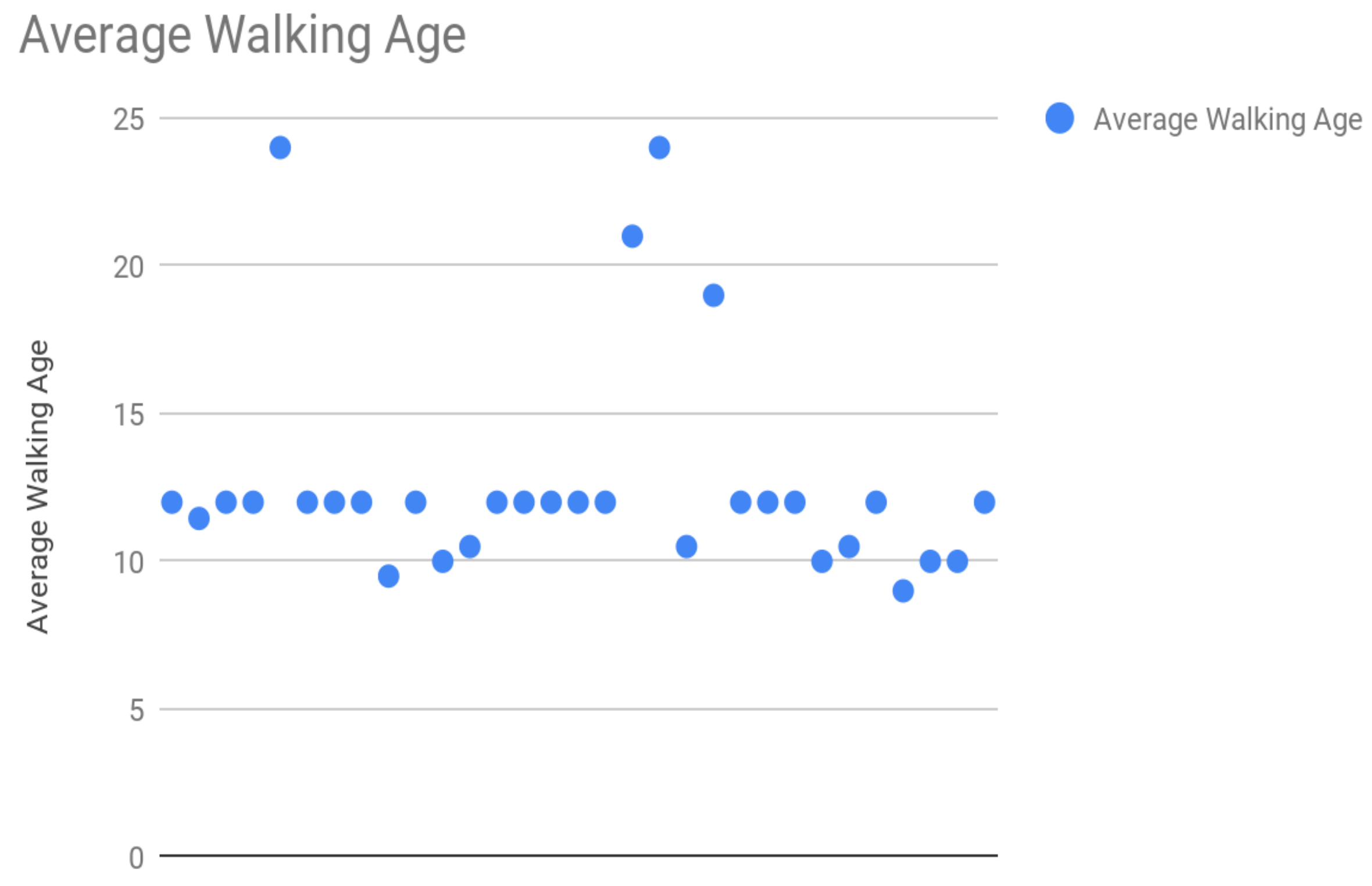


Only in the cultural west are so many different devices used to contain infants, to such an extent that the majority of the day is spent being moved from one to the next. This collection of containers is typical for western parents.

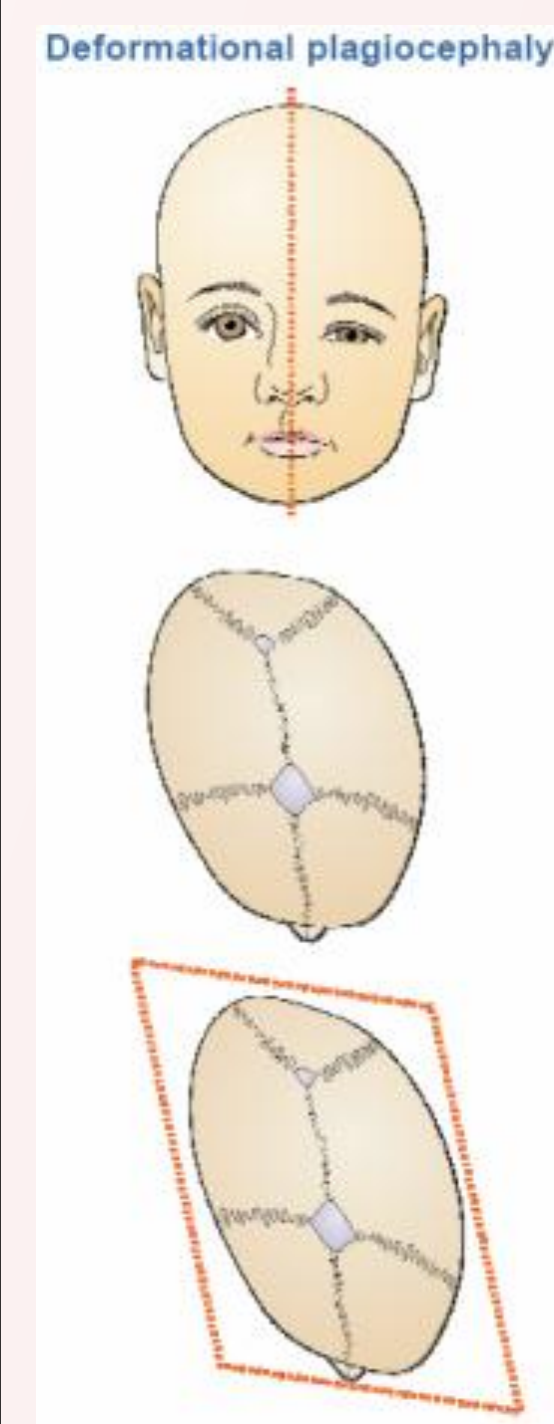
The behaviors intended to increase the comfort level for western infants may have a detrimental effect on the development of the elements of mind and body necessary for motor abilities by impairing both movement and visual perception while avoiding the stimulation of physical contact.

### Results

- Few instances of significant delays
- Precocious development of motor activities in several non-western cultures
- Strong association between infant posture and restraint type
- Other possible factors:
  - sibling involvement
  - parental responsiveness
  - infant stimulation



- In spite of very diverse parenting practices the majority of infants begin walking at very near the same age.
- This makes the delays in development associated with Container Baby Syndrome that much more alarming.
- Levels of parental involvement vary greatly even within cultures
- Positioning and restraint are consistent even across wider regional groups which include multiple cultures



### CBS: Container Baby Syndrome

- Deformities of the skull
- Delays in speech
- Impaired motor ability
- Delays in social and reasoning abilities

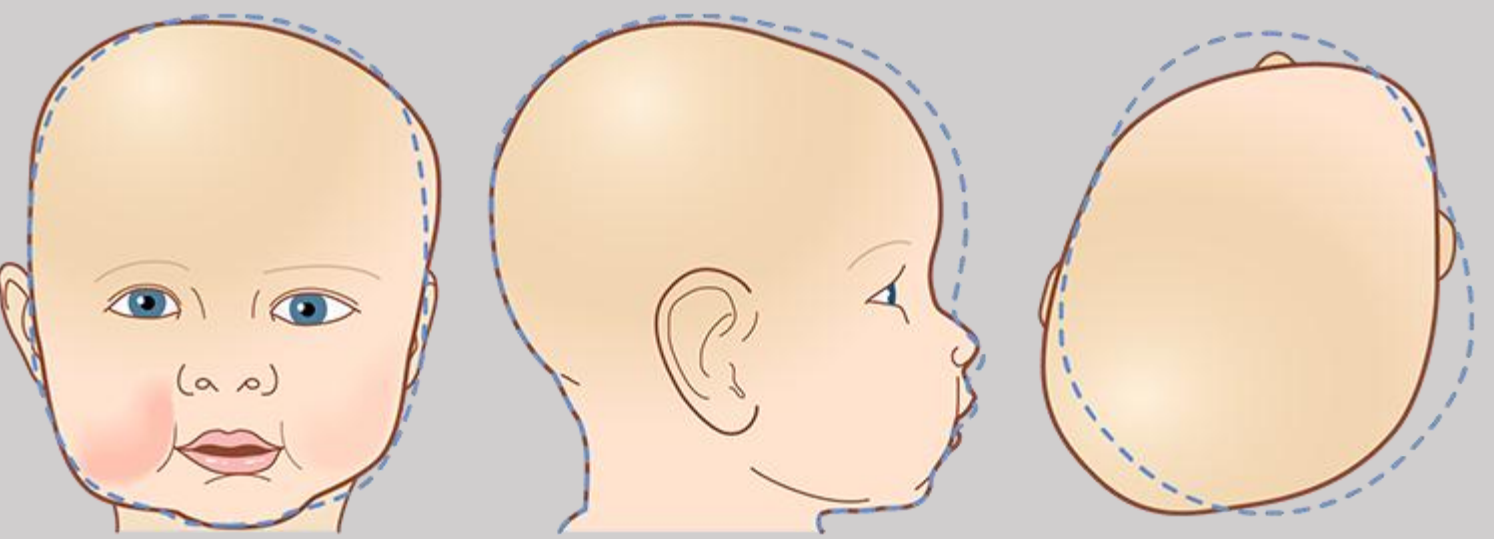


### Why are siblings a factor?

- Natural tendency of infants mimic and observe other children
- More opportunity for observation and interaction with siblings outside cultural west
- Development trajectory changes with more stimulation

### Future Directions

- More research to identify the behaviors with greatest influence on development is needed.
- Good practices for recording milestones are lacking as all standard are based on infants of the cultural west and activities that do not map well onto all cultures.
- Individualized standards for each culture group based on activities of daily living are needed.



Skull and facial deformities like plagiocephaly(above) and torticollis are increasingly common in the cultural west