

Australopithecus



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The fossilized remains of this 3 year-old early human child are often referred to as belonging to ' Lucy's baby' since she was found only a few miles south from where Lucy was found Lucy over two decades earlier, even though the child's fossil is actually 100, 000 years older than famous Lucy. She is nicknamed ' Selam' after the Amharic (Ethiopia's official language) word for ' peace,' and is the most complete early human child known up until Neanderthal times.

Prior to Selam's discovery, researchers knew very little about early human growth patterns as the early human fossil record consists of few children. Because Selam's baby teeth erupted in a pattern similar to a three-year-old chimpanzee's, researchers now know A. afarensis children shared a chimpanzee's fast growth rate. But her brain size indicates that a human growth rate was evolving.

CT-scans of her skull show small canine teeth forming in the skull, telling us she was female. Her partial skeleton is made up of a nearly complete skull and torso, and several limb bones---her legs indicate she could walk upright, but other skeletal features showed she could also climb trees. The hyoid bone beneath her neck looks ape-like, and her gorilla-like collarbone and long, curved fingers show significant tree-climbing. Image Credit: Zeresenay Alemseged