weight shift, and a new reaching behavior emerges at a higher level of development (Figure 2-14).

From this illustration, the role of stress as a developmental motivator is apparent. Stress factors that caused the child to alter posture in order to function also provided the purpose for function to be associated with new experiences, differentiated and adapted so that higher level behaviors change and development proceeds.

During the normal developmental process, spatiotemporal stress primarily occurs in three situations: (1) when adapting to new experiences, (2) when the sensorimotor-sensory integrative process is temporarily altered in some manner, and (3) during transition of one behavior to another. In these three situations, a child may attempt to adapt with his or her highest level of learned performance. When the method of coping does not suffice, the system will subsequently “call forth” older patterns to resolve the situation and enhance maturation.

Throughout development, the self-system learns to manage stress experiences of the environment and ultimately develops methods of coping. Thus, adaptation of developmental and purposeful sequence skills is dependent upon spatiotemporal stress. As a result, the system matures. Adapting children thrive on spatiotemporal stress experiences that can be managed and controlled by the self-system.

**Distress.** Stress that is out of control and cannot be managed is termed **distress.** Distress as a property is defined as a negative factor for development, characterized by an alteration of the system’s equilibrium, and resulting in purposeless performance and