

A Guide to Becoming

Mobile and Active



Curiosity goes hand in hand with your baby's desire to become mobile. Mobility requires balance, which begins to develop before birth and continues to develop into adulthood.

Good balance depends on strong back and tummy muscles. Typically, babies will start to move around between 6 and 12 months. They may begin moving on their tummy, or crawling on one leg and dragging the other. It could be a combination of rolling, rocking and squirming on their stomach, bottom or back. Some babies crawl backwards first, some are bottom shufflers. All are fine and should be encouraged by providing lots of open, safe and soft spaces with enticing toys in appropriate places to encourage movement.

Encourage lots of tummy time, especially between 6 – 9 months, to encourage tummy crawling. Progress to providing different surfaces for tummy crawling: through tunnels, under tables and over cushions, as this encourages crawling on hands and knees. Place toys around your baby slightly out of reach. Roll balls to follow or use pull-along toys and noise to attract attention and interest. As they progress, encourage your baby to get onto all fours, rocking backwards and forwards.

Development to walking is likely to go through the stages of standing, cruising, taking the first few steps, waddling, toddling, walking and running. Help your baby support their weight on their legs in a standing position by lifting them and placing hands under their armpits, then holding both their hands when they are in a standing position. Gradually they will be able to pull up to a standing position whilst holding on to furniture or you for support. Encourage and support this. The cruising stage, walking around holding furniture, provides the opportunity to start lifting one foot and step sideways. This can progress to your baby's first few independent steps.

Good balance helps children:

- To not fall over
- Know how they fit into a space (i.e. have spatial awareness)
- Keep still when sitting, standing or lying
- Develop eye movement and vision

Safety

As your baby becomes able to move around their environment independently, new areas will become accessible. Remember to ensure equipment and everyday household items are out of reach. As babies begin to pull themselves up to stand, check that furniture is stable and will not topple over.

Tips for encouraging movement

- Create spaces for movement with lots of stimulating materials and regular interaction
- Make sure the environment is safe and very small (choking hazard) objects are out of reach
- Try to ensure clothes allow for easy and free movement e.g. Dresses can interfere with moving on all fours

