Promoting Your Child’s Development

‘Walking and Beyond’

Information for parents and carers

Children’s Physiotherapy Service (Cambridgeshire)
All babies develop at different rates. This leaflet aims to give you ideas to help your baby develop skills through play and exploring the world around them.

You can use the same toys and songs in different ways, depending on the activity.

**Bridging the Gap**

Start by encouraging your baby to walk to the edge of the couch. Direct their attention by placing toys on furniture nearby.

To progress your baby’s balance and stability it may be easier for them to walk barefoot when practicing at home.

Encourage the baby to reach toward the toy, grasping onto the nearby furniture.

After a while the baby will be moving confidently between both pieces of furniture. Slowly move the furniture further away to increase the distance they need to walk.

Gradually your baby will become more confident to take some steps away from furniture.

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**Where can I get further information…?**

**National Childbirth Trust:**
https://www.nct.org.uk/

**Association of Chartered Paediatric Physiotherapists:**
http://apcp.csp.org.uk/publications/parent-leaflets

**What to expect when: Guidance to your child’s learning and development**

**Birth to five:**
http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/birth-five
Other Things to think about….

Baby equipment:

Your baby will need to go in a car seat, baby seat, or other type of baby equipment at some time during the day.

We recommend that you avoid leaving your baby in a baby seat for longer than 30 minutes, unless you are travelling. This is because they restrict your baby from moving freely.

We also recommend that the use of baby walkers and door bouncers is limited to no more than 15 minutes at a time. Equipment that supports a baby in a standing position does not help your baby learn to walk. It can give an unnatural experience of standing and has been shown to be unsafe.

Walking with push and pull toys

Walking with push and pull toys may help your baby improve their confidence when up on their feet. They may walk with a wide base of support to help them stabilise.

Encourage your baby to push the trolley. You may need to help them guide the trolley at first.

You can encourage your baby to collect toys/items for you and put them in their trolley.

Be careful on wooden floors as the trolley may run away from them. They may also find it harder to push on carpet.

To achieve more stability you can place heavy books on top to slow the trolley down/dolls pram.
Your baby will go from learning how to sit up to walking around the house on their own, the normal range for reaching this milestone is very broad. During this exciting time you can help your baby gain their confidence to take their first steps through simple games, songs and words of encouragement.

When supporting your baby to walk guide them from their hips or hold their hands lower down rather than above their head.

As your baby becomes more stable on their feet try giving them less support, making them work to keep their balance.

Avoid wearing shoes inside so your baby can feel their feet on the floor and experience different textures.

Progress walking by loosening your grip or offering one hand only, rather than two. From there try bridging the gap with a teddy or a hoop.

Encourage walking between two adults making sure they have their balance first. Give them praise when they take some steps independently.

Your baby may walk with their hands up in the air and feet wide apart. This helps them to gain stability and balance. By passing them a toy or a ball to hold, it will encourage them to bring their hands down and challenge their balance further.

By walking on uneven surfaces or over objects this will improve your baby's balance and special awareness.

Trying to climb up stairs will help your baby improve their coordination and strength.

Song Ideas

Off you go!

Supported Stepping