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On the Move: From baby to toddler

***Information for
parents and carers***

Paediatric Physiotherapy

On the Move 2

From baby to toddler

Your child is now ready to progress to standing and walking. This leaflet will show you how best to help them learn and develop these key skills. Learning to transfer from one position to another is key to developing independence.

High kneeling

Your child can now transfer from the floor into high kneeling at furniture. Encourage them to develop balance and stability in this position by placing toys slightly out of reach, or on the floor to encourage them to reach in all directions.



High kneeling at a table

Standing

Introduce standing up from sitting on your leg as you kneel on the floor, in front of a low table / a toy box etc.

Support your child with your hands at their knees. Make sure they stand up by leaning forwards first, rather than back onto you: remember “Nose Over Toes”.

Once standing, only offer as much support as your child needs; support at the trunk if they seem very wobbly, but lower your hands to the pelvis or the knees as they become more stable.



**Guiding your child up to standing
from sitting on your leg**

Children often learn to stand by leaning on the furniture, rocking back on to their feet and pushing up through the knees. This is absolutely fine. You can help them to learn the next step by guiding them up from a half-kneeling position, like this:



**Guiding your child up to standing
from half-kneeling**

Cruising

This means moving to either side, using furniture for support. To do this, your child must learn to shift their weight onto one leg to allow them to take a sideways step.

You can guide them with your hands on their pelvis, as shown in **Picture 1** on the next page.

Once your child has begun to cruise, you can encourage them by moving toys, offering toys from above, below, and round to either side (**Picture 2**).

Gradually, your child will start to face the direction they want to travel (**Picture 3**) and will start holding on with only one hand.

Help them to the next stage by placing toys on the floor so that they will learn to squat down and then regain standing to play, or by creating gaps between supportive furniture (**Picture 4**). This introduces the idea of letting go and will soon lead to toddler freedom and independence.

Many children will let go and take their first independent steps quite quickly, while others are naturally more cautious – both ways are fine, and your child will find their way.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4

Walking independently

Once your child is cruising, you can be reassured that those first steps are getting closer. Push along toys can be helpful for some children, bridging the gap between a sturdy item of furniture to something less reliable, but they're not essential. Floor play is still valuable as they will be practicing getting on and off the floor, building strength and stamina.



Example of a push along toy

Holding your child's hands offers them reassurance, just make sure you don't hold their hands too high, as this affects balance and posture. Your hands should give reassurance and balance, but let your child take most of their own weight.



Holding your child's hand

If your child is still reluctant to let go, you can try giving a 'bridge' between them and your hand. For example, if you each hold one end of a small item, such as a wooden spoon, or quoit, they still feel close to you, but they will be learning balance and stability.

Feet

All toddlers have little squidgy, flat feet. Some feet will turn out, some turn in, sometimes legs are a bit bowed, sometimes knock-kneed. All of this is very normal and the main thing to do is allow your toddler to be active in as many places as possible – parks, the beach, on stairs, soft play etc. And have fun!

Contact details

If you do have any concerns, your GP, Health Visitor, or local Child Development Team Physiotherapist will be able to advise you. Telephone numbers are available on the NHS Grampian website, or contact:

Physiotherapy Department

Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital

 **01224 552669**

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