



Information for families to encourage standing and walking

We are asked to see many babies who are not walking before 18 months. It is important to understand that babies walk at different rates. This can be for various reasons.

If your child is not yet walking it is important to consider the factors below:

I should not be compared to my siblings or family as we all develop at different stages.

Average age for achieving walking is between 8-18 months



I need opportunities and a safe space to move on the floor

I may walk later than my friends if I commando crawl, bottom shuffle or have more flexible joints.

Child walkers do not help to promote walking.

I am more likely to be active and healthy when I am having fun.

Your child may have achieved some walking skills already. They may be crawling, pulling up to stand and cruising along the furniture. That's fantastic and shows good progress. They might just need more time to practise before taking those first steps.

Here are some of our favourite activities to encourage your child to develop the skills needed for walking. Pick the activities that suit your child's stage best. Have fun and your child will be **Ready, Steady to Walk!**

Get Ready.....

Playing on the floor is important. It will help your child strengthen their muscles, learn about their body and explore their environment. Help your child to move in and out of the positions in these activities. Do them slowly to let your child do as much as possible.

1. Moving from lying to sitting

Help your child by guiding them up from their hips.



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2. Moving from sitting to lying

Guide your child into a lying position from sitting.



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3. Playing in a crawling position

Your child might need some support under their tummy at first to help them stay in a crawling position. When they can do this themselves, encourage them to reach for a toy or roll a ball/ push a toy car.



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4. Weight bearing through feet:

Sit your child on your knee with their feet flat on the floor. Try not to let them lean back on you.

Encourage them to reach forward to the floor for toys. This begins to put weight through their feet to get ready for standing up. You can also put your hands on their knees to help gently put some weight through their feet.



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..... Get Steady

Standing

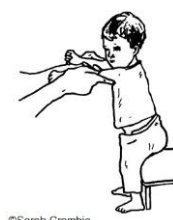
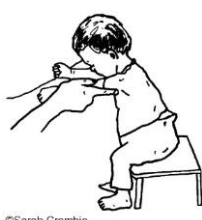
The following activities are to help your child develop their standing.

1. From your knee

From sitting on your knee, encourage them to stand up to see toys on a small table or sofa in front.

2. From a stool or small chair

Support their arms and encourage them to stand up as shown below. Try not to pull them up.



3. Climbing

Let your child practise climbing up and down from the sofa.

4. Play in kneeling

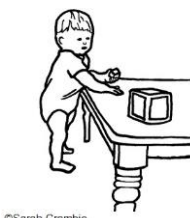
Encourage your child to kneel at a surface to play.

From this position you can then encourage your child to pull to stand. You might need to guide them up from their bottom or hips to begin with.



5. Standing at furniture

Encourage standing at furniture using both of their hands for support. Once they can do this, hold toys for them to reach up and to the side. This will help them to use their tummy and back muscles and develop their muscles for standing.



6. Cruising

Encourage your child to side step along a surface for toys or items that interest them. To begin with, you may have to guide them from their hips. Remember to practise moving to both sides.

7. Moving between surfaces

Once your child's cruising has improved, encourage them to move between surfaces. Start with small gaps. This can be between two chairs or from a sofa to a small table. This will encourage them to step out to the side and start to challenge their standing balance.



8. Standing on their own

Practise standing. Support their hips or hold their arms from the front. As they become steadier, try holding them less firmly or try 'letting go' for a few seconds.



Scan these QR codes with your phone to open some videos which give examples of the above activities:



.....Walk

Your child will walk when they are ready. Here are a few things to try:

1. Use a push along toy

At first you may need to hold the toy steady so that it is not too far in front.

2. Hold your child's hands from the front.

Guide them forwards to encourage stepping.



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3. Stepping between surfaces

Make the gaps bigger between furniture and encourage your child to step between them. This could be from a sofa to a push along toy.

4. Try holding one hand instead of two

Make sure that you are slightly in front of them to encourage them to step forwards.

5. Hold your child's hand lightly.

Don't hold it too high.

Trips and Falls

Falling is part of normal development. Children will often fall up to 17 times an hour. Their balance and walking skills will improve with practise.

Encourage:

- short bursts of walking
- walking on different surfaces e.g. grass, stones, sand
- activities such as soft play, going to the park, swimming etc

Footwear

Young children who are not yet walking do not usually need shoes. Once your child is walking, you should make sure you buy the correct footwear for them.

Scan this QR code with your phone for more information on suitable footwear:



Baby Walkers

Physiotherapists and other Health Professionals **do not** recommend the use of baby walkers. There are two main reasons for this:

- **Safety** – even under supervision there are high numbers of accidents reported every year including: falling down stairs; head injuries; burns, scalds; trapped arms / legs
- **Delayed development** – some studies have shown that baby walkers might actually delay standing and walking. Contrary to popular belief, they **do not** teach a child to walk. They can cause a child to walk on their toes which may continue when they walk independently.

If you are using a baby walker:

- Your child should have good head control and ideally be able to sit up by themselves
- Make sure both feet are flat on the floor, not on their toes
- Never leave your child unattended
- Never use near steps or open doors e.g., Patio windows
- Avoid use near open fires, cookers, radiators and trailing wires
- Check floor is free of objects that could cause tipping
- Remember, your child can move at up to 7mph, faster than you can react
- Use for a maximum of 20 minutes at a time

Scan this QR code with your phone for more information on baby walkers:



When to seek further advice from health professional

- Does your child have difficulty moving their arms or legs? Do they appear stiff or floppy?
- Are they moving one side of their body more than other?
- Are they unable to stand with both feet flat?
- Are there significant concerns with delay in other areas of development? e.g. their play, language development, fine motor skills etc.

Please contact your Health Visitor or GP if you have any concerns. We hope that you have found this booklet helpful. Please ensure that common sense prevails when following any of the activities we have suggested.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about any of the information or activities or if you would like this booklet in a larger print.



Thank you to NHS Lanarkshire for development and use of this leaflet



Kind permission given by NHS Lanarkshire Paediatric Physiotherapy to use and add our NHS Grampian contacts.

Contact Details

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Children and Young Person's Physiotherapy Advice Line



This advice line is for anyone who has questions or concerns

Paediatric Physiotherapists have the skills and knowledge to offer support and advice to help with your concerns about:

- **DEVELOPMENT**
Is a child not meeting their physical milestones?
- **MOBILITY**
Does a child have difficulty getting around or move differently to others?
- **INJURY**
Has a child had an injury that is not improving as you would expect?

The Advice Line is open:
Wednesday 1pm – 3pm | Friday 11am – 1pm
TELEPHONE: 01224 559877