

Top Tips to Support Your Child's Development



Physical Development: Moving and Handling

Teaching your child to crawl – activities to support the development of strength and skills needed for crawling.

Opportunities to practice and experience crawling will support your child's whole body strength, balance and visual-spatial skills.

Not all children will crawl or go through the stages of physical development in the same sequence. Some children will get around by rolling, bottom shuffling or commando crawling but it will still be possible to provide opportunities to play crawling games at a later stage. This will ensure your child experiences crawling and the benefits this brings physically, including the skills needed for coordination.

You may want to ask a Physiotherapist and/or Occupational Therapist for advice and support around positioning, depending on your child's stage of development.

1. Provide opportunities for 'tummy time' and encourage your child to play whilst on their tummy to support the development of strength in their shoulders, neck, arms, back and trunk necessary to support crawling. 
2. Your child may also enjoy (and sometimes prefer) to lay on their tummy whilst lying on top of their parent/carer (either tummy to tummy, or place your child on their tummy on your knee). Make this time fun by playing games, using songs and rhymes or talk to your child whilst in this position.
3. Use play mats or activity blankets with a variety of textures and colours to explore whilst your child is on their tummy.
4. When your child is on their tummy, place favourite toys in front of your child, just out of reach, and encourage your child to reach out for / to move towards the toy. 
5. Use a play mirror (acrylic mirror) and place in front of your child whilst on their tummy, providing visual stimulus.
6. Use a rolled up towel or blanket (or a c shaped cushion) and place under your child's chest/arms to provide support whilst on their tummy. This will promote head, shoulder and body strength and control.
7. Support your child to develop 'midline control' to support coordination and move alternate left / right hand sides of the body needed for crawling. Lay your baby on your knees whilst facing you and bring their hands together, play games taking their left hand to their right toes and right hand to their left toes.
8. Once your baby is strong enough to be on their hands and knees in a crawling position, try placing your hands/arms behind their feet to give them something to push away from. You can also play games and guide your child to rock back and forth in this position, encouraging movement.



9. Continue to place toys and objects of interest just out of reach, or sit in front of your child when they are on their hands and knees to encourage them to move towards what is in front of them.

10. Demonstrate and model crawling for your child, playing pretend games in the crawling position may motivate your child to imitate you.

11. Once your child has begun to crawl, use play tunnels or a cardboard box for your child to crawl through. Play games transporting objects from one end to the other as your child gains strength.



12. In a safe environment, place cushions, pillows or soft toys around to create a space for your child to explore and encourage crawling over different 'obstacles'.

