

District of Parry Sound Best Start Network

Month 2: Walking and Running Introduction

Objectives of this month:

1. Caregivers will become familiar with the developmental stages of walking and running.
2. Caregivers will learn fun and easy ways of assisting skill development in the running and walking domains.
3. Children will benefit from the muscular, cardiovascular, and social rewards of running and walking games.
4. Children will explore movement and their physical environments through walking and running.

The Importance of Walking:

- This eventually becomes the primary method of mobility for typically developing children, and is how they access and explore their environment.
- Upright locomotion or walking allows for easier socialization with age-matched and older peers.
- Provides proprioceptive input into the lower extremities to assist in development of body awareness.

The Importance of Running:

- Assists in the development of lower extremity strength and cardiovascular endurance.
- Further challenges a child's balance system by increasing the speed in which they move through space and have to adjust to environmental changes.
- Fun and fast way for children to explore their environments.
- Allows for participation in sports and recreational activities – soccer, baseball, etc.

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Developmental Expectations for Walking & Running

- 0-2 months:** When supported in upright at the trunk, baby will lift one foot and then the other in walking movement – stepping reflex.
- 2-4 months:** Baby can stand on her legs while supported at her chest or at her hands
- 4-6 months:** Baby is able to stand while holding on to adult fingers; shoulder blades are not squeezed together as tightly
Baby can lean forward at her trunk but she lacks the full range of motion and strength to fully straighten her hips
- 6-9 months:** Baby can stand against a supported surface while belly leaning against the support
Baby is starting to pull up to stand with hands & upper body
Baby learns to hold on and reach for an object
Some babies are able to stand with one arm held
- 9-12 months:** Baby is able to squat to lower self to floor to pick up a toy
Baby stands unsupported & able to cruise along furniture
Baby able to move from one support to the other
Baby able to walk with 1 or 2 hands held
Baby able to take a few steps or walk independently
Baby is able to climb over obstacles & furniture, and creep/crawl up stairs
Baby lowers self from standing
- 12-15 months:** Baby getting steadier when walking, and is able to stop & change direction
Child is moving confidently through the house
Child is starting to bend to pick up a toy from standing without support
- 15-18 months:** Child walks up & down stairs without support & supervision
Child walks reasonably quickly on even ground
Child squats to pick up toys/objects from the floor
Child is climbing up onto furniture (chairs & couches)
- 19-21 months:** Child completes more than one physical activity at the same time – walks with pull toy
Child is able to run, and is more coordinated when walking/running with fewer trips & falls
- 22-24 months:** Child rarely falls even when running & dances to music
- 25-30 months:** Child manages short walks & walks up stairs without support

- 31-36 months:** Child attempts to walk along a line, curb, or log
Child walks on tip-toes across a room
Child runs quickly with maturing gait pattern
- 48 months:** Child walks with a heel to toe gait pattern and a reciprocal arm swing
Child walks forward on a line and on a beam
Child walks forward and backwards on tiptoes
Child is able to run, stop and change direction
Child is starting to learn to gallop leading with one foot
- 5 & 6 years:** Child walks, runs and jumps well
Child is able to gallop and skip