

# HELPING YOU UNDERSTAND... CRAWLING



## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CRAWLING?

Crawling represents an exciting stage in your babies' development! Your baby is beginning to move around, explore and interact with their environment. The process of learning to crawl requires coordination between arms and legs, stability and muscle strength and it takes practice. Development of crawling can cause anxiety for parents and this guide can help you understand more about crawling and address some common concerns.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

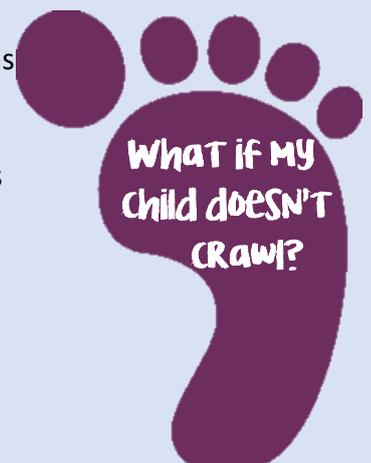


On average, babies start crawling between 6 months and 10 months. Some babies will show signs of preparing to crawl, such as 'commando' crawling along the floor and balancing on their hands and knees. As your baby is beginning to crawl and move they are developing strength in their back and shoulder muscles. These muscles are important for stability when they start to crawl and it's a stepping stone towards walking.

Remember that young children develop at different rates and in fact not all babies will crawl! Some babies will learn to pull themselves up to standing and go straight to walking.

Some babies will choose other methods of getting about, such as shuffling on their bum, rolling or moving around on their tummies, so they don't really develop crawling. These are all signs that your child is developing their motor skills.

Not all babies crawl. Some babies get around by different methods such as commando crawling and bum-shuffling. It shouldn't matter what method of movement your child chooses as it encourages the development of co-ordination skills and improves their balance and strength. Health professionals often advise on strategies to help young babies develop crawling. Tummy-time is often advised as this is a good approach to helping your baby prepare for crawling. If you are concerned then speak to your health visitor or GP who will be able to advise you further.





Just as babies will use different techniques of moving themselves around at different times, crawling backwards is just another method. Backward crawling is unlikely to be something to worry about – sometimes babies just find this method easier. It is possible that they will begin to move forwards once they feel more comfortable or may just skip this altogether and begin standing. If you want to encourage your baby to move forwards then placing a toy/yourself in front of them may encourage them to come to you.

Some parents choose to put their children in crawler (also known as pre-walker) shoes. These are generally for cosmetic purposes but may also offer protection against environmental factors (e.g. coldness) and/or scrapes from the ground. It is unlikely that this type of shoe will offer any additional benefit for their feet. Circumstances do vary however and it may be a requirement of wherever you are (e.g. nursery) to have your child's feet covered. As with all shoes, it is important to think about getting the right shoes.

We always advise to think about the purpose of the shoe you are buying and also your child's developmental stage. Shoes at this very early stage should:

- 👣 Be lightweight
- 👣 Fit the *size* of the foot
- 👣 Fit the *shape* of the foot
- 👣 Be flexible and not too rigid
- 👣 Be free from seams which may cause skin irritation and/or blistering



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To learn more about crawling and developmental milestones, you may find the following information useful:

👣 [Birth to five timeline - NHS Choices](#)

## WHAT WILL WE ADD TO THE UNDERSTANDING IN THIS AREA?

Over the next 5 years, Great Foundations will be doing research to understand parental views related to children's foot health and investigate what health and industry professionals know and think about children's feet. We will also be researching how children's feet develop as they learn to walk.



*Great Foundations is a collaborative initiative being led by the Universities of Salford and Brighton.*

*The research hopes to provide a major leap forward in the quality of knowledge and understanding of children's foot health.*

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