

BABY BYTES

For families with infants and young children

Motor Transitions

Some infants need extra encouragement to transition from one position to another. Babies need lots of time and a safe place to practice new skills.



DID YOU KNOW???

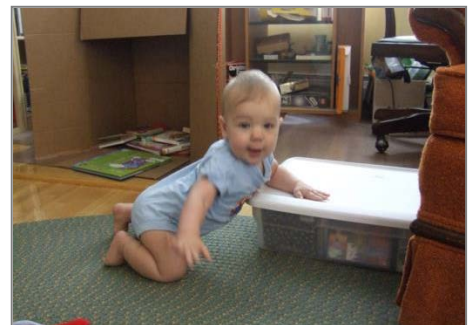
The development and quality of a child's motor skills are influenced by many factors: tone, strength, endurance, motor planning, sensory integration, vision and hearing.

- Infants typically build on their motor skills sequentially, one building block at a time.
- Infants with loose joints (joint hypermobility), low or high muscle tone or premature infants may reach motor milestones a bit later.
- Some infants will kneel and pull up to stand at furniture on their own while others need a little more motivation to encourage kneeling.

MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOP IN STAGES

"I have a lot to learn before I can walk on my own"...

- Infants develop the strength, coordination and balance needed for pulling up into standing, cruising and walking in a series of stages.
- Propped kneeling allows the child to accept body weight through the knees in preparation for crawling and standing.
- Kneeling play helps develop balance, coordination and leg strengthening.



ACTIVITIES AND SUGGESTIONS

To encourage kneeling play:

- Place a toy on a firm cushion, box, or stool in front of your child.
- The bottom step of an indoor staircase is a good place to play in a kneeling position. Be sure to place a safety gate a couple of steps up.
- Provide support to the child at their hips if necessary. They may need you to hold their knees together at first ... squeezing their knees together with yours.
- Try some light rocking side to side, if they tolerate it, to initiate weight shifting in kneeling or in a 4 point crawl position.
- Encourage tall kneeling as opposed to sitting back on their feet.
- Provide interesting objects (a wooden spoon, a plastic bowl, a brightly colored dishcloth) to encourage transitions in play.
- Sing a song and keep it fun. www.simcoecommunityservices.ca/early-literacy
- Try placing a mirror in front of your child so they can both engage with you and enjoy face to face play.

Next Steps

- Practice moving from kneeling to sitting.
- Bend one leg up to a $\frac{1}{2}$ kneel position to encourage pulling to stand at furniture.
- Sturdy large toys, a box, inverted laundry basket or plastic storage container to push around helps develop muscle and balance control needed for walking.

Share the excitement...have fun!

