

# YOUR BABY'S MOVEMENT FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT 0-3 YEARS



Movement is vital for a child's development, and a problem with movement may prevent healthy development and could affect normal play and learning.

The information in this leaflet gives a guide to the typical stages during which your child will develop movement skills. Every child is unique and develops at different rates.

However, if you have concerns about how your baby is moving or developing, speak with your doctor or health visitor as soon as possible so that your baby can get the help they need.

The most common delayed motor milestones in children with cerebral palsy are:



Not sitting by 8 months (adjusted for babies born early)



Not walking by 18 months (adjusted for babies born early)



Using one hand more than the other before 1 year (adjusted for babies born early)

**If in doubt, check it out**

**ACTION**   
CEREBRAL PALSY | IDENTIFY  
INTERVENE  
IMPACT  
Registered Charity No 1165217

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for more information



# BY 3 MONTHS

## LEARNING HEAD CONTROL



# BY 6 MONTHS

## LEARNING TO ROLL AND REACH

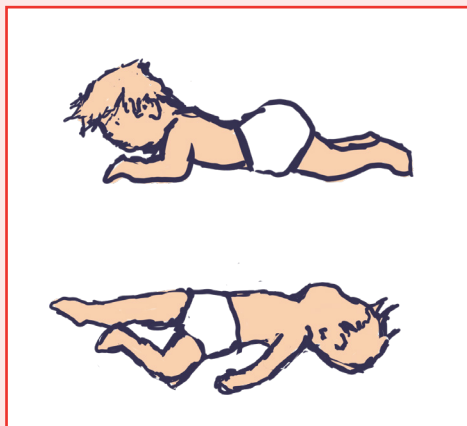
### TYPICAL PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ➔ While lying on their tummy, baby pushes up on arms
- ➔ While lying on their tummy, baby lifts and holds head up
- ➔ When lying on back, arm and leg movements are smooth and continuous
- ➔ When lying on back, baby kicks legs alternately and sometimes together
- ➔ Makes eye contact and follows moving object with head and eyes
- ➔ Seeks out faces and watches own hands



### SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR

- ➔ Difficulty lifting or holding head steady
- ➔ Stiff legs with little or no movement
- ➔ Keeps hands fisted and lacks arm movement
- ➔ Not kicking legs or moving arms and legs up when lying down
- ➔ Doesn't follow moving object with head and eyes



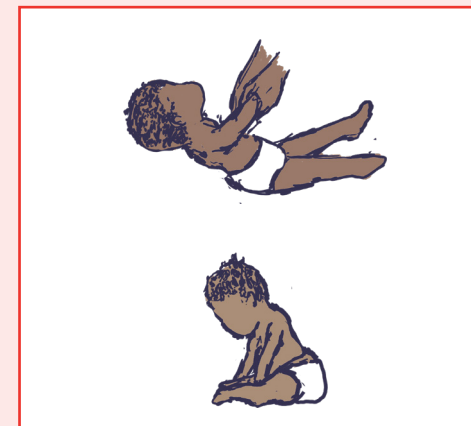
### TYPICAL PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ➔ Uses hands to support self while sitting
- ➔ Rolls from tummy onto back and back to tummy
- ➔ Can hold head strongly if pulled forward from lying on his back into a sitting position.
- ➔ While standing with support, will push down through feet
- ➔ While lying on back or on tummy, will reach for and can grasp an object with two hands.
- ➔ When lying on back, can bring both knees to tummy
- ➔ When lying on back, can bring an object or hands to their mouth
- ➔ Makes eye contact and follows a moving object with head and eyes in all directions.



### SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR

- ➔ Rounded back
- ➔ Does not roll from tummy onto back or back to tummy
- ➔ Unable to lift head up or poor head control
- ➔ Seems very stiff or very floppy
- ➔ Arches back and stiffens legs
- ➔ Difficult to bring arms forward to reach out



# BY 9 MONTHS

## INDEPENDENT SITTING



# BY 12 MONTHS

## CRAWLING AND PULLING TO STANDING

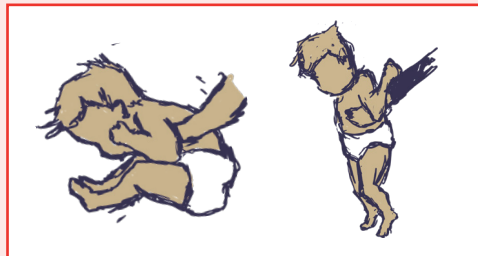
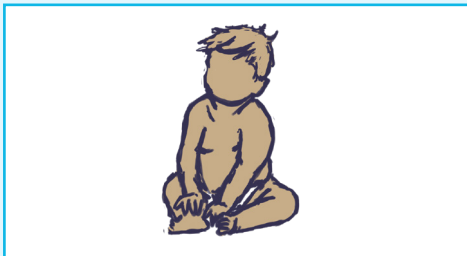


### TYPICAL PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Sits and reaches for toys without falling
- Moves from tummy or back into sitting
- Starts to move with alternate leg and arm movement, for example, creeping, crawling
- Actively uses both hands together
- Transfers objects from one hand to the other
- Picks up objects with thumb and fingers
- Turns head to watch things moving while sitting
- Starting to babble

### SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR

- Unable to sit without support
- Cannot take weight on legs when supported
- Uses one hand more than the other
- Rounded back
- Uses only one side of body to move
- Inability to straighten back
- Does not look where you are pointing
- Unable to make sounds

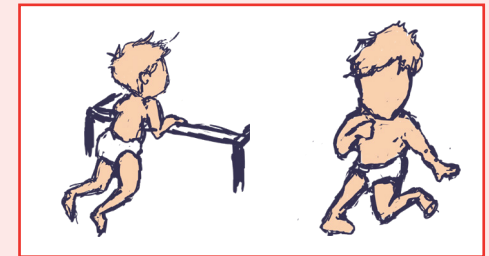
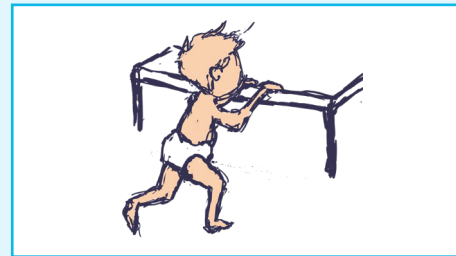


### TYPICAL PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Crawls on hands and knees or bottom shuffles
- Pulls to standing and cruises along furniture
- Stands with support and takes several independent steps
- Can drop or throw an object
- Can move fingers individually and can point at objects

### SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR

- Does not crawl
- Needs to use hand to maintain sitting position
- Is not able to stand when supported
- Only uses arms to pull up to standing
- Sits with weight to one side
- Stiffly bent or stretched arms
- Is not able to copy and learn gestures such as waving or shaking head
- Does not point to objects
- Loses skills once had



# BY 18 MONTHS



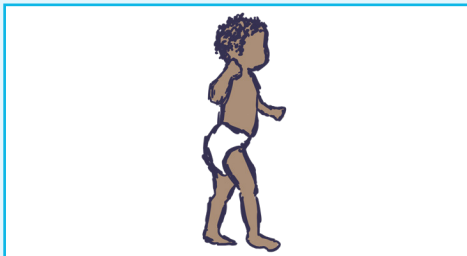
# BY 24 MONTHS

## CRUISING AND WALKING

## CONFIDENT WALKER

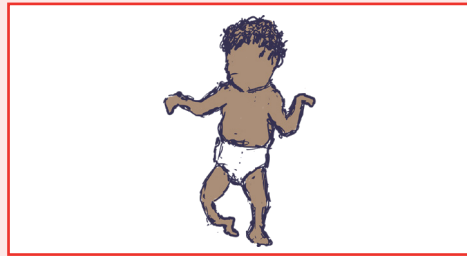
### TYPICAL PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Stands independently for several seconds
- Walks while holding on and can take 2-3 steps independently
- Squats to pick up toy
- Uses both hands independently to make gestures, explore and use objects
- Holds and drinks from a cup and finger feeds



### SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR

- Poor standing balance, falls frequently
- Unable to take steps independently by 18 months
- Walks on toes
- Does not point to show things to others
- Does not know what familiar things are for
- Does not copy others
- Does not notice or mind when a caregiver leaves or returns
- Loses skills once had



### TYPICAL PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Walks independently and seldom falls
- Stands with support
- Can drop or throw an object
- Can move fingers individually and can point at objects



### SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR

- Unable to take steps independently
- Poor standing balance, falls frequently
- Walks on toes
- Does not walk steadily
- Loses skills once had

## BY 3 YEARS CONFIDENT WALKER AND STARTING TO RUN

- Walks steadily, able to walk backwards, run and jump.
- Walks up and down steps with support.
- Bends over from standing to pick up a toy
- Climbs onto or down from furniture without assistance.
- Uses both hands together and separately
- Can throw and catch an object with both hands together
- Carries out simple dressing tasks
- Eats with spoon or fork
- Joins in with actions

- Unable to take steps independently
- Poor standing balance, falls frequently
- Walks on toes
- Does not walk steadily
- Loses skills once had



# IF IN DOUBT, CHECK IT OUT

# Your child, their future

Seeing a warning sign does not necessarily mean that there is anything seriously wrong with your child, but still if in doubt, check it out. If you have any concerns about your child's development or spot any of the warning signs, please speak with your doctor or health advisor.

## Why is it important to do something now?

From birth till 3 years of age, your baby's brain is developing and growing very rapidly. Your baby's brain is building lots of new brain connections at this early stage so spotting delayed development and getting support can make a big difference as this helps build stronger connections in the brain and can reduce many long-term health issues. Your doctor or health visitor will be able to assess your child and ensure that they get the care and treatment that they need.

*"I'm a proactive parent, and had I known that the golden years for making the greatest difference to my child's outcomes were the first three years, I would have got researching as fast as I possibly could to find help in the form of therapy and support for my son."*

**Helen Hunt**  
Mother

*"This simple resource will be really valuable in supporting parents to understand the development of their infant's movements and to seek help if these are not developing as expected. This could lead to earlier identification of emerging signs of conditions such as cerebral palsy, and consequently earlier intervention and support for the infant and family."*

**Dr Anna Basu, BMBCh MA PHD FRCPCH FHEA**  
Clinical Senior Lecturer, Newcastle University  
Honorary Consultant Paediatric Neurologist, Great North Children's Hospital

Motor development reference: Mary Sheridan's From Birth to Five Years- Children's Developmental Progress, Fourth Edition, Ajay Sharma and Helen Cockerill, Routledge, 2014. Help your Baby Develop Motor Skills | Track Baby Milestones (pathways.org). NICE Guidelines for Cerebral Palsy in under 25s: Assessment and Management (2017).

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