



The Association of Paediatric Chartered Physiotherapists

APCP Information – Baby-walkers – Are they necessary? Information for parents and carers

Physiotherapists and other Health Professionals **DO NOT** recommend the use of babywalkers.



There are two main reasons for this:

- 1) Safety – even under supervision, there are high numbers of accidents reported every year including - falling down stairs, head injuries, burns, scalds, and trapped arms / legs.
- 2) Delayed development – some studies have shown that baby-walkers do not encourage development and may actually delay the achievement of standing and walking.

Contrary to popular belief, they **DO NOT** teach a child to walk. They can cause a child to walk on their toes which may continue when they walk independently.

If you are using a babywalker with your child:

- **Never leave your baby unattended**
- **Never let your baby near steps or open doors e.g., patio windows**
- **Avoid use near open fires, cookers or radiators or trailing wires**
- **Check floor is free of objects that could cause tipping**
- **Your child can move at up to 7mph, faster than you can react**
- **Make sure both feet are flat on the floor, not on their toes**
- **Your baby should have good head control and ideally be able to sit up alone**
- **Use for a maximum of 20 minutes at a time**

Play safe and encourage development without a baby-walker, please see overleaf:

We recommend these alternatives:

- Encourage your child to play on their tummy on the floor when they are awake and supervised
- Encourage rolling and sitting up
- Encourage crawling and pulling to stand
- Encourage supported standing



These activities will help encourage your child's development and help your child to:

- Learn about their body
- Explore their surroundings
- Progress to standing and walking

Useful references

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents- www.RoSPA.com

Child Accident Prevention Trust- www.capt.org.uk

How to keep your baby or toddler active- <http://bit.ly/3YJhkdQ>

Only buy or use a baby walker that complies with BS EN 1273:2005: the date is important (the last four digits are the year the standard was approved, in this case 2005) because that's when more stringent safety requirements were imposed. Do not buy second hand baby walkers.

This leaflet has been produced by the APCP committee after a review of literature and where there is a lack of evidence, a consensus of expert opinion is agreed, correct at time of publication. For information about references and evidence searched, please visit our website. APCP <https://apcp.csp.org.uk> V1 published March 2023 V1 review June 2024 V1 Review June 2029.

The Association of Paediatric Chartered Physiotherapists (APCP) is one of the CSP's largest Professional Networks and continues to thrive with a membership of over 2,900 paediatric members. We encourage our members and support staff to work together to enhance the quality of life, wellbeing and independence of babies', children, and young people that we deliver care to.



The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) is the professional, educational and trade union body for the UK's 64,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and support workers.



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