



Royal Society for Blind Children

How can I help my baby crawl, stand and walk?

Babies with a vision impairment often begin to crawl, stand and walk later than children with typical vision. In fact, they may not crawl at all! Your baby might creep, which is when they keep five points of contact with the floor, or they may choose to bottom shuffle, they may even go straight onto their feet!

When it comes to getting your baby mobile, we suggest speaking to your child's Qualified Teacher for Vision Impairment (QTVI) and asking them to make a referral to a Qualified Habilitation Specialist (QHS) who will be able to offer you child specific advice relating to your baby's mobility.

While you are waiting to see your habilitation specialist, there are lots of activities you can do to help encourage your baby to start moving around the home.

Getting motivated to crawl

- To help get your baby moving they will need to be motivated, try using their favourite toy to help encourage them to move for it.
- If they throw their toy or are reaching for something try to encourage them to get it themselves first, don't always bring everything to them.
- Give them lots of praise when your baby tries to move and explore themselves.

Standing up

- Encourage your baby to pull themselves up on you.
- Set up your baby's favourite toys on low tables or on the sofa and encourage your baby to stand and play. (Make sure these surfaces are sturdy enough your baby cannot pull them onto themselves if they pull against them).
- From behind your baby, hold their waist and support them as they stand. As they become more confident you can reduce the support and replace it with lots of reassurance and just a light touch.

Cruising

Once your baby is standing to play its time to encourage them to start to move around. You can do this by placing some of their favourite toys a few steps away from them along some furniture. This will encourage them to take side steps towards it. Make sure there is nothing else they can pull off from the furniture when they do this!

Walking

Once your baby is cruising it is time to think about getting them ready for walking. It is a good idea to familiarise them with each room, take them in at standing height and show them any obstacles. Doing this can help you identify any hazards too.

Walking can be difficult as your baby doesn't know what this looks like and it can feel a little scary to them as there is less reassurance from the floor and furniture than when crawling and cruising.

- Let your baby see what walking feels like by having them stand on top of your feet and walking with them.
- Encourage them to walk between the sofa and you for a few steps, or between two adults. Try not to move backwards as they are coming towards you, even if they are doing well. Just extend the distance next time! Offer a reward when they reach you; a hug, a song, make this a fun game!
- Consider using a push along toy, one that is strong enough for baby to pull themselves up to standing with. This will support your baby with walking but will also let them find obstacles that are in their way when they are moving.
- Your baby might initially want to hold both hands, try to do this as low down as possible so their arms are not reaching up in the air, as they become more stable, reduce this to a single hand hold.
- Your baby might still try to follow the walls and furniture to move around rooms, this will help them stay orientated and feel safe. Try to encourage them to use just one hand and walk facing forwards instead of sidestepping.
- Try not to move things around the house, your baby will learn where things are, this includes the obstacles they need to avoid!

Our Families First team of family practitioners are here to support you through your child's early years and into the future.

RSBC can help you with:

- practical advice about your child's development
- support when you feel overwhelmed.
- understanding your child's vision impairment better
- living as a family and being supportive of each other

Call 020 3198 0225 or email connections@rsbc.org.uk

