



Chapter 10

Movement

A young baby has little control over how he moves. But slowly, as he grows, he gains control first of one part of his body, then another:



First, he gains control of his head and body (trunk)...



...next he develops arm and some hand control...



...and finally, leg control.

Children learn to move because they are interested in something, like a toy, and want to reach it. A child who cannot see well will need more encouragement to move because he may not know there is an interesting world to explore.

For a child who does not see well, movement may also be frightening. Help your child get used to movement by encouraging him to move from the day he is born. If your baby is less than 6 months old or does not move much, first read Chapter 5 on “Activities for the Young Baby.”

When your child can control his head and sit with help, he is ready to begin the activities in this chapter. These activities will help your child learn to:

- sit by himself and crawl
- stand, walk, and use a cane
- have strong, flexible hands and arms
- feel fine details and shapes with his fingers

For information on keeping your child safe, see Chapter 9 on “Safety.” For information about safety when walking in new places, see page 112. For information on ways to encourage play between your child and other children, see page 129.

ACTIVITIES

If your child can see a little, be sure to adapt these activities to best use his remaining sight (see Chapter 4).

► **To help your child sit by himself**

Place your child in a sitting position with his legs apart and his arms in front to support himself. Show him some toys and then put them in different places, like between his legs, and on the right and left sides of his body. As he moves to find the toys, he will use and develop his balance.



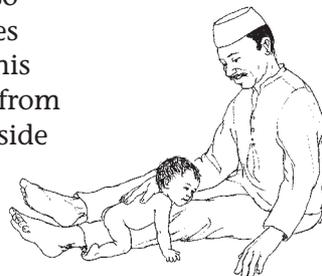
► **To help your child learn to crawl**

When your child can lie on his stomach and push his upper body up with his arms straight, he is ready to start learning to crawl. The activities in this section can help him learn to move his upper and lower body separately, to put weight on his arms and legs, and to shift his weight from side to side. All these skills are important for learning to crawl and should be done in the order shown here.

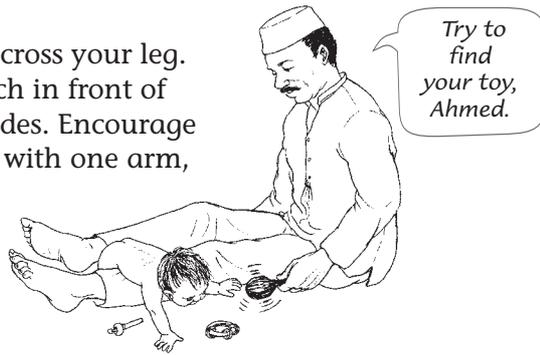
1. When your child is lying on his stomach, put some toys at his side near his waist. Then help him push up on one hand and reach for a toy with the other hand.



2. Place your child over one of your legs so that his arms are straight and his knees are bent. To help him bear weight on his arms and legs, and to shift his weight from side to side, rock your leg from side to side while pushing down gently on his shoulders and lower back.



3. Place your child sideways across your leg. Have some toys within reach in front of him on the right and left sides. Encourage him to reach for a toy, first with one arm, then the other.



Here's your favorite shaker, Diego. Can you come and get it?



4. If your child drags his stomach as he starts to crawl, support his stomach with your hands or with a towel. As he moves toward a toy, pull the towel up slightly on one side, then the other, so that he learns to shift his weight from side to side. As he becomes more able, give him less support.



5. Once your child can stay in a crawl position on his hands and knees without help, encourage him to reach for a toy. Try to keep him moving forward so he does not sit back on his bottom.

6. Once your child can crawl easily, encourage him to crawl up stairs. Place his hands on the first step and move up with him. Then help him turn around and come down the stairs by sitting on his bottom.



As soon as your child is crawling, you will need to make sure that the places where he crawls are clean and safe for him.

► **To help your child learn to stand**

Let's bounce up and down, Natife.



Hold him in a standing position on your lap. Bounce him up and down a little so he gets used to feeling where his feet are. Also move him gently from side to side so he learns to shift his weight.

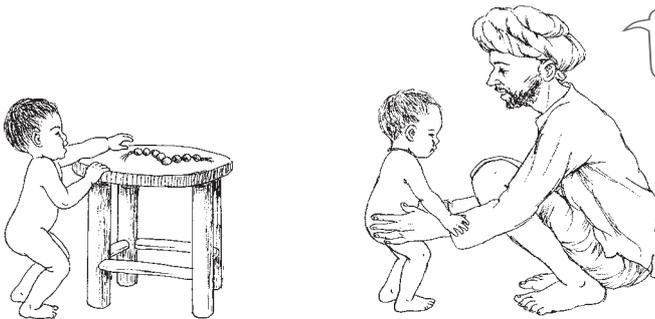
Sit on the ground with your legs apart. Encourage your child to hold onto your body and pull himself into a kneeling position, and then to stand up.

Keep pulling, Anil. There you go!



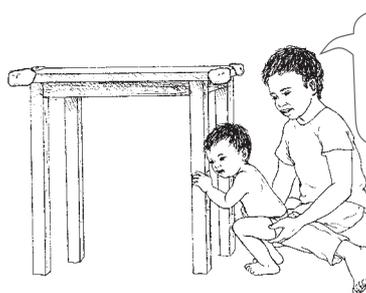
Put toys he likes on a chair or table and encourage him to pull himself up to get them. Or put your hands on his hips to help him up.

Up you go, Viku!



To help your child lower himself from a standing position to a sitting position, support his bottom as he lowers himself to the floor.

I'm holding you, Manuel. You can sit down.



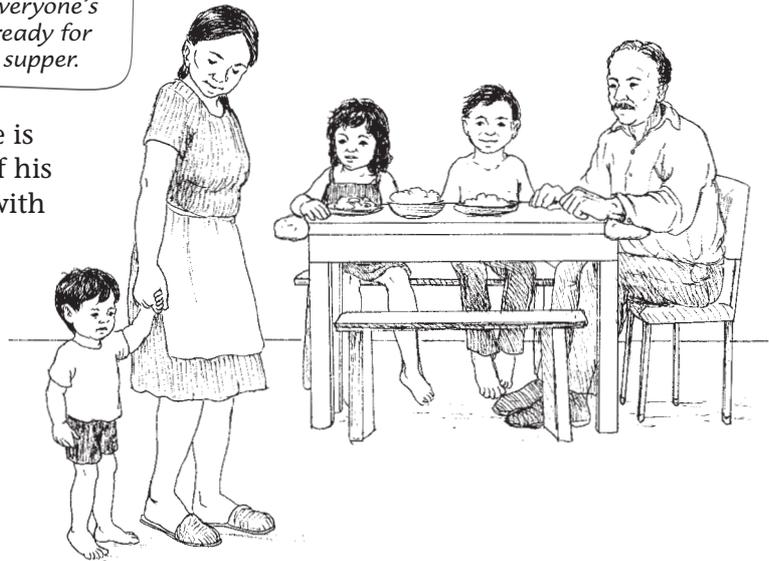
► To help your child learn to walk

Encourage your child to walk back and forth, holding onto a piece of furniture. This will also help him learn where different things are in the house.



Let's walk to the table, Pablo. Everyone's ready for supper.

When his balance is better, hold one of his hands and walk with him.



Let him start walking alone by pushing a simple walker, chair, or box. Put some weight in the box or chair so he has to push harder and so it does not move too fast.

Be patient. It takes a long time for a child to feel safe walking without holding on to anything.



Once your child is walking, be sure to think about possible dangers in your home and the area around it, and how to make walking safer.

► **To help your child learn to walk up and down stairs**

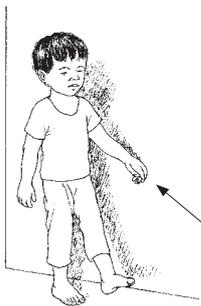
To help your child walk up stairs, encourage him to stand up and hold onto the rail and move one step at a time. Later, teach him how to go down the stairs too.

Hold the rail, Fernando, so you won't hurt yourself.



► **To help your child use his arms for guidance**

As your child gets older, he can learn to use his arms to guide and protect himself while walking.



At home, he can use the back of his hand to follow a wall, the edge of a table, or other objects.

This boy's hand is touching the wall for guidance.



In other places he can hold one hand in front of his face, with his palm facing away from his body. This hand protects his face and head. He should hold his other hand about waist high, to protect the rest of his body.



When he falls, teach him to protect himself by putting out his hands and bending his knees as he falls. This will keep him from hurting his head.

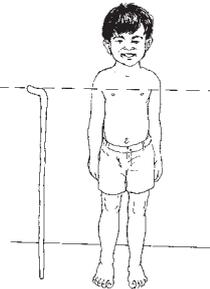
Accidents will happen just as they do to children who can see. But it is important to let your child do things for himself, to learn to be independent.

► **To help your child learn to use a stick (cane)**

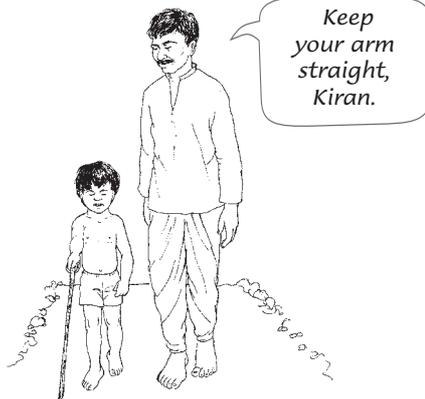
A child can start learning to use a stick whenever he seems ready, usually when he is 3 or 4 years old. Using a stick can help a child feel more comfortable when walking in new places.

With practice, it can also help him walk faster, with long, sure steps. This is because he can feel further ahead with a stick than with his hands or feet.

The stick should be thin and light, but strong enough so it does not break easily. The top of the stick can be curved or straight.



It should be tall enough to almost reach your child's shoulders.

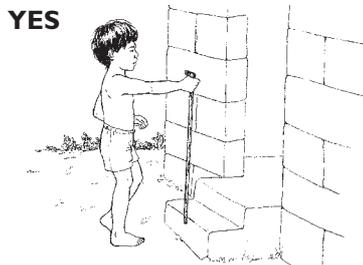


At first, have your child lightly touch the ground in front of him with the stick as he walks. Stop before he gets tired. 5 to 10 minutes is enough at first.

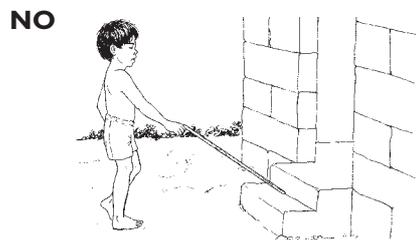


As he gets used to using the stick, teach him to move it from side to side, lightly touching the ground. The width of the swing should be a little more than the width of his shoulders.

Your child can also use a stick to help him go up and down stairs and curbs:



Teach him to hold the stick like this to feel the height and position of each step.



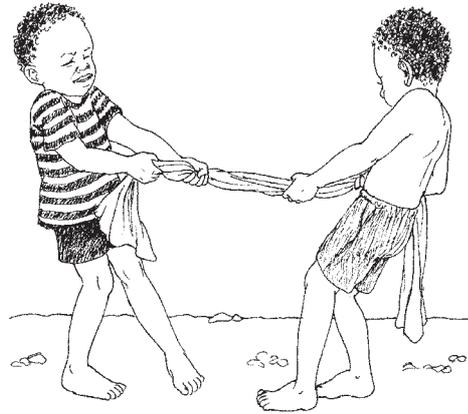
Do not hold the stick like this! The step may make the stick stop suddenly and hit him in the stomach.

► **To help your child learn many kinds of movement**

When your child can walk easily and is steady on his feet, let him move around in open places where he will not bump into things. When he feels sure of himself, he can learn all the different movements of a child his age:



pushing



pulling



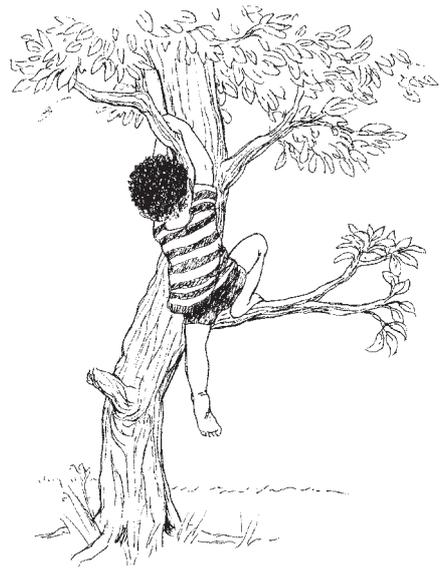
sliding



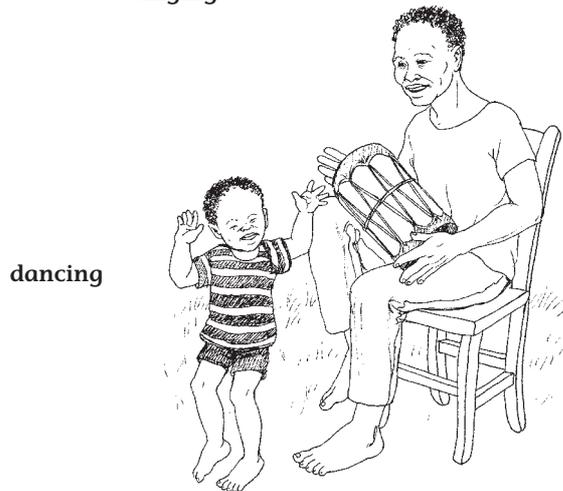
balancing



swinging



climbing



dancing

Hand and finger skills

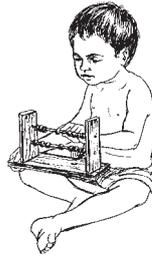
All children develop hand and finger skills, but these skills are harder to learn for children who cannot see. A child who cannot see well must learn to control his fingers, hands and arms because he depends so much on them to give him information about the world. These skills are also important when he learns to read Braille (see page 139).

Children who cannot see well may not be as active as other children. Encourage your child to participate in the everyday activities that will help him develop:

- strength and flexibility in his hands and fingers
- the ability to feel small and fine details and shapes with his fingers



as a young child



older and
at school



beginning to
learn a trade

► To help your child develop strength and flexibility in his hands and fingers

Give your child tasks or make up games in which he uses his finger muscles — for example, rolling balls of mud or clay, kneading bread dough, shelling peas, or squeezing oranges.

Give your child tasks or make up games in which he breaks or tears things — like grass, leaves, corn husks, or shells — into little pieces.





Encourage your child to do things that require turning his hand, like wringing the water out of wet clothes, opening jars with screw-on lids, or turning the radio off and on.

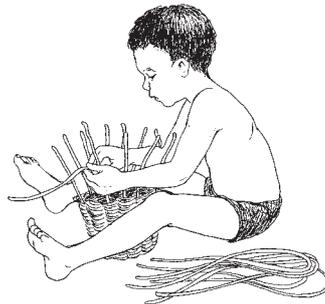


Encourage your child to scribble and draw. Drawing in wet sand or mud lets him feel the shapes that he has drawn.

Teach your child games or skills in which he must use his fingers separately, like putting shoelaces through the holes of his shoes or tying knots.



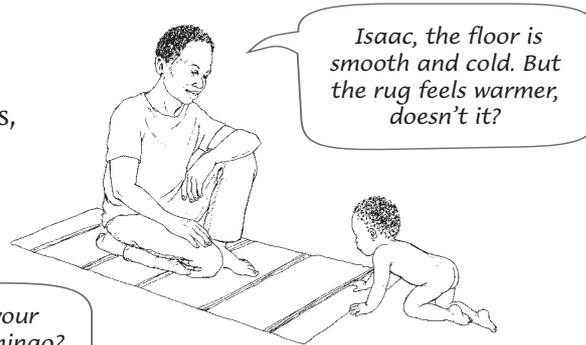
Teach your child crafts, like weaving, knitting, or crocheting, that require skillful use of his hands.



Activities like pushing toys through a hole in a box (see page 66), eating with the fingers or with eating tools (see page 76), and using buttons (see page 81) are all good for developing strength and flexibility.

► **To help your child develop the ability to feel fine details and shapes with his fingers**

Let your child crawl on different surfaces, like wood floors, rugs, wet and dry grass, mud, and sand.



Encourage your child to find his own clothing by the feel of the material.



Ask your child to help with chores in which he must feel the differences between small things.

Glue string or yarn in different patterns on a piece of paper or cloth. Then let your child trace the lines with his fingertips.

