

Your Child is Walking ... Now What?

A Walking Guide for Parents



Practice, Practice, Practice

Regardless of when your child started walking, the actual practice of walking and falling is the largest contributor to a child's skill development. That means a child who has been walking for five months, but who has had limited practice time walking, may demonstrate the same skills as a child who has been walking for two months and has had many hours of practice per day.

The more a child is able to practice walking, the more they learn and develop problem-solving skills to navigate new environments. As they practice walking, children develop new movement strategies and the ability to predict how to adjust to changes in surfaces, such as a slope or a step.

The average toddler takes 2,367 steps and walks more than 2,000 feet in one hour. That's seven lengths of a football field!



Falling is Normal

Falling is part of the learning process as toddlers strengthen their walking skills. As toddlers gain experience with locomotion, the ability to move from one place to another, they will begin to learn and predict when a change in surface might cause them to fall. At this point, they will learn to use alternate strategies to safely negotiate different environments, from outside to indoors.

**Did You Know?
Toddlers fall on average 17 times per hour!**



Checklist for Walking Practice

Ensure your home is a safe place for your child to learn to walk.

As your child's balance improves, encourage safe practice on new surfaces.

- Create an open area, free of clutter, for walking.
- Pad furniture with sharp corners, as needed.
- Supervise your child's early mobility and set up sturdy gates at the top/bottom of stairs.
- Take your child to the park to allow for walking on new and uneven surfaces.
- Allow your child to practice on grass, sand and hills, which offers a challenge for your child while allowing for a soft surface in case of a fall.
- Set up small obstacles for your child to learn to negotiate distances by stepping over and around.

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