

## **NORMAL VARIATION IN DEVELOPMENT BOTTOM SHUFFLING**

### **Information for Parents and Carers**

#### **WHAT IS BOTTOM SHUFFLING?**

Bottom shuffling babies sit on their bottoms and move themselves around using their legs and sometimes their arms. They do this instead of crawling. They may use a variety of ways to do this. Some lean to the side and use one arm and leg, some use both legs together and some bounce. Bottom shuffling is often seen in babies who have not spent time playing on their tummy.

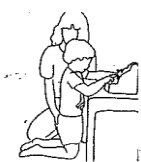
Most babies who bottom shuffle are later walkers (typically walking from 18-24 months of age). Initially, they will often lift their legs up when you attempt to support them in standing.

#### **IS IT NORMAL FOR CHILDREN TO BOTTOM SHUFFLE?**

**YES** – some children will master their motor milestones early and others will be much later. Some may miss out on developmental milestones altogether – such as crawling. Some babies will learn to bottom shuffle instead – this is a normal variant. Babies who bottom shuffle can move very quickly and their hands are free to play with toys and they can use them whilst moving, etc. They therefore often have little motivation to pull up to stand on their feet or use their arms to crawl.

#### **HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?**

##### **Help your child to kneel**

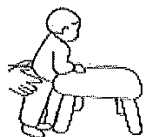


Encourage your child to pull themselves up onto their knees. They can do this against you or on a piece of furniture. Kneeling helps to improve stability around the hips and lower body.

##### **Help your child to take weight through their legs**



Sit on the floor with your legs crossed. Sit your child on your lap with their legs over yours. Their knees should be bent so that their feet are flat on the floor. If your child tends to lean backwards, use your body to keep their back straight and leaning forwards slightly.



Encourage your child to lean forwards to reach for toys/objects, progress to reaching down to retrieve objects from the floor. Encourage your child to stand, with support, at low furniture.

## Help your child to pull to stand from your lap

Kneel or sit cross legged on the floor in front of a sofa or small table. Sit your child on your lap making sure that their hips and knees are at 90 degrees and their feet are flat on the floor.



Place a favourite toy on the surface of the couch or table and encourage your child to reach forwards for it.

Support them around their hips with your hands. As they straighten their knees, move their hips forwards and up, over their feet into standing.



Children who bottom shuffle tend to try to stand with their bottom behind their feet so they need help to bring their hips forwards, over their feet. Encourage them to lean their tummy against the table/surface. You can help your child to learn to sit down by bringing their hips back and down onto your lap.

When your child learns to stand up independently you no longer need to support them around their hips.

## **WILL A 'SIT-IN' BABY WALKER OR BOUNCER HELP MY CHILD TO LEARN TO STAND AND WALK?**

**NO**, Physiotherapists and other Health Professionals **DO NOT** recommend the use of baby-walkers/bouncers.

There are two main reasons for this:

**Delayed Development** – many studies have shown that baby-walkers do not encourage development and often 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.

**Safety** – they have also been the cause of many serious accidents. Even under supervision there are high numbers of accidents reported every year.

*Adapted from Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust*

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*This leaflet has been produced after an initial review of the literature and where there is lack of evidence, a consensus of expert opinion is agreed, correct at time of publication*

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