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The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy is the professional, educational and trade union body for the UK's 50,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and associates

APCP

<https://apcp.csp.org.uk>

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



Association of Paediatric Chartered
Physiotherapists

Babywalkers - are they necessary?

Information for parents



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

There are two main reasons for this:

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.

Delayed development – many studies have shown that babywalkers 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.

If you are using a babywalker with your child:

- Never leave your baby unattended
- Never let your baby near steps or open doors eg. 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 babywalker.

We recommend these alternatives:

- Encourage your baby to play on their tummy on the floor
- Encourage rolling and sitting up
- Encourage crawling and pulling to stand
- Encourage supported standing

These activities will help your child to:

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

All of these encourage your child's development

Useful references

www.RoSPA.com

www.capt.org.uk

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.