How and when can I help my baby learn to walk?

Babies learn to walk alone when they have achieved the skill of standing by themselves. The months your baby spent crawling, squatting and standing have prepared her muscles so that she can progress to walking. A good way to know if your baby is close to walking alone is to see if she can stand by herself for about ten seconds. Most babies learn to walk alone by 15 months of age.

Your baby needs time moving from squat to stand by herself using a low table, toys or furniture. Practicing crawling, squatting and coming to stand movements can help strengthen the right muscles for good standing and walking. If your baby is standing alone for a few seconds, it can be fun to hold her hands or trunk and practice walking.
Walking practice when your baby needs your extra help can also be accomplished by providing support at the shoulders. Support at the hips can help her learn to feel her own balance. Soon she will be strong and confident enough to walk all by herself, ready to explore her world!

Note: Placing your eight to twelve month old child in a walker or exersaucer can actually delay the onset of independent standing and walking in some babies, particularly premature infants. These devices tend to promote imbalanced musculature of the trunk and legs. Toe walking is a common and preventable consequence of frequent walker and exersaucer use.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor.

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