Walking

Walking is your child’s first upright movement on both feet. It requires the transfer of body weight from one foot to the other, with one foot always in contact with the ground. As this takes place, a corresponding shift results in the centre of gravity of the body, bringing about the movement.

Used in almost every aspect of daily living, walking gives your child the independence and freedom to move about and explore his environment.

Walking with an awareness of effort, space and people or object relationship is important. Proficiency and mastery of walking techniques for difficult situations will help your child move with agility and confidence.
Developmental Phases

Walking

**Initial**
- Difficulty maintaining upright posture. Unstable and loses balance.
- Short steps and flat-footed contact with ground. Toes turned outwards.
- Feet apart to balance. Knee bends when foot contacts ground, followed by quick straightening of legs.

**Transition**
- Takes wider steps. Heel-toe contact with ground.
- Out-toeing is reduced. Upward lift (foot off the ground) is visible.
- Arms show limited swing.

**Mature**
- Relaxed steps. Minimal upward lift. Definite heel-toe contact with ground.
- Feet land one in front of the other roughly along a straight line. Distance between steps depends on required walking speed.
- Spontaneous arm swing in opposition to leg (e.g. when left arm swings forward, right leg steps forward).

Approximate Age of Development (in years)

<table>
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<th>1</th>
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Teaching Strategies

Walking

What to do if your child...

... is walking with toes pointed outward?
- Create wide to narrow pathways with cones/ropes/markers.
- Get your child to walk within the boundaries.

... is not able to walk in a straight line?
- Place footprints or markers on either side of line.
- Get your child to walk following the prints closely.

... is shuffling feet?
- Place ropes/markers/bean bags or draw lines on the floor with wide to narrow intervals.
- Get your child to lift each foot high as he walks over the obstacles.

... needs to walk more steadily?
- Draw different pathways on the floor or use court lines if available.
- Get your child to walk following the lines closely.
# Variations

"Can your child walk...?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How the body moves</th>
<th>Force/Effort</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Flow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• on tiptoe like a little mouse</td>
<td>• quickly away from the ants</td>
<td>• as if someone is pulling his back</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• as if he is on hot sand</td>
<td>• in quick-slow rhythm as if being pushed and then pulled back</td>
<td>• in start-stop rhythm according to signal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• as if wearing Mummy’s high-heeled shoes</td>
<td>• quickly or slowly according to a drumbeat</td>
<td>• like a robot running out of battery</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Direction/Pathways</th>
<th>Levels/Extensions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• around a hoop</td>
<td>• forward or backward on his heels</td>
<td>• tall like a giraffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• without touching anyone</td>
<td>• following a zigzag or circular line</td>
<td>• as if on ice with knees bent low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• in between the cones</td>
<td>• and turn away when he meets a friend</td>
<td>• slowly like a chimpanzee</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self (body parts)/People</th>
<th>Objects</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• holding your hands</td>
<td>• around the cones like busy bees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• towards you and then away from you after a high-five</td>
<td>• under the net, carrying a ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• in line with a group like marching soldiers</td>
<td>• with bean bag on his head</td>
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</table>

## COMBINATIONS

- On tiptoe quickly like a mouse to get away from a nest of ants
- Tall like a giraffe in a zigzag pathway while holding hands with you
Activity 1  
Walking  

WHAT YOU NEED  
- Newspaper, cut into long strips

HOW TO PLAY  
- Arrange newspaper strips to form ladder on floor. Have your child walk the “ladder” in different ways.

  Ways to walk  
  - Walk the “ladder” by stepping in the spaces. No stepping on the “rungs” now!  
  - With each foot on either side of the “ladder”, straddle walk to the opposite end  
  - Role playing while walking. Be a tip-toeing thief when stepping in the spaces; be a huge elephant when straddle walking etc.

- Challenge your child to repeat the activity walking backwards.

BE AWARE  
- Ensure your child’s toes are pointed forward when walking.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT  
- Do this activity at places such as shopping malls or supermarkets where there are markings on the floor.
Activity 2
Walking

HOW TO PLAY
• Encourage your child to role play as a robot and walk around in different ways. He can walk:
  - On heels like a penguin
  - On toes like a sneaky thief
  - With feet pointing outwards like a clown
  - By marching smartly like a soldier
• Name a shape or number – square, circle, triangle, number 8 or 6. Have your child walk its outline.
• Ask your child to count and record the number of steps he takes to walk each outline. Get him to compare and share with you the shape or number he found easiest or most difficult to trace.
* You and your child can walk the same shape or number – either holding hands; or in opposite directions, giving each other high-fives as you pass each other.

BE AWARE
• Try walking hand in hand with your child. It will help him swing his arms naturally for balance and stability.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT
• Do this activity wherever the environment is spacious and safe.
Activity 3

Walking

WHAT YOU NEED

• Recycled materials, such as big empty bottles or toilet rolls, to serve as markers

HOW TO PLAY

• Ask your child to count the number of steps he takes to reach different parts of the house. For instance, from your child’s bedroom to yours.

• Get your child to explore walking at different speeds (fast and slow), force (light and heavy steps) and pathways (straight, curved and zigzag). Have him compare and identify the fastest way to reach the destination.

• Create an indoor maze with markers forming a trail around the house. Have your child follow the markers to find the end point.

• Challenge your child to walk according to your clapping tempo (fast, faster, slow and slower).

• Play a range of music. Get your child to change his walking style with each change of music.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

• Do this activity while shopping. You and your child can try walking according to the tempo of the mall’s piped music.