

# Crawling Crawling



Crawling, when babies drag themselves along the ground, normally begins from approximately 7 to 9 months of age (this rate may vary considerably, depending on the child and the environment) and precedes the more mature creeping movements that begin between 9 and 12 months.

It's not **when** these movements start that's important, but **how** the child moves.

Babies have a set of survival reflexes called "primitive reflexes". These should be under higher brain control by the end of 12 months. Activities like crawling and creeping help this process. A report in the *Medical Journal Lancet*, Feb. 2000 confirms that if this doesn't happen, learning and behaviour are adversely affected. These activities help children gain voluntary control of their movements, helping them achieve the best of their genetic inheritance.

## Why is it important that babies learn to tummy crawl?

As babies drag themselves across the floor or carpet they are:

- learning coordination of body and limbs in preparation for creeping;
- strengthening arms and hands, legs and feet, finding out how to use them in preparation for climbing, walking, jumping and hopping;
- finding out that they have two sides to their bodies and how to balance them in movement;
- stimulating hundreds of touch and position messages that flow to the brain telling them about limbs and tummy and where they are in space;
- developing visual skills as they see toys in the distance for instance, moving towards them, adjusting and focusing at varying distances;
- learning about space and time - how far is that toy and how long will it take to get there?

