



Movement is Learning!

Do a quick inventory...how many of these products you have in your home or child care for infants to use on a daily basis:

- Swing
- High chair
- Baby carrier
- Exer-saucer
- Walker
- Bouncy seat
- Seats designed to make babies sit up
- Jumpers
- Play pens
- Strollers

Chances are, even if you checked only two of these items, babies in your care may be spending too much time in one of these “containers,” unable to freely experience and explore the environment.

A moving infant is a learning infant. Gross motor (large muscle) development is closely linked to thinking, social, and emotional development. Babies need to spend as much time as possible being able to move freely. Freedom of movement allows babies to manipulate their bodies in any way and at any time they choose. As babies learn to move and manipulate their own bodies, they become more competent, secure, and motivated learners.

Infants benefit greatly from a responsive environment. They need to be able to see how things work, what people do, and gain an awareness of their surroundings. As babies experience their surroundings they are building brain cell connections that they will use for future learning.

Provide as many opportunities as possible throughout the day for a baby to be on on the floor, allowing for freedom of movement.

Freedom of Movement Checklist:

Safety is the number one concern when caring for infants and children. If you need to use an infant container, do so with limited amounts of time. Best practices suggest no more than ten minutes if not eating, riding in the car, or for other safety measures.

- Dedicate a special spot in your home that is specifically arranged for the baby to move freely, if not the whole space
- Have clean floor spaces that are free of any safety hazards such as items that may be a choking hazard and dirt
- Place a clean blanket, mat or sheet on the floor to place baby on
- Try arranging furniture in ways that would prevent people and younger children from stepping on baby
- Play yards and gates can help create a special safe place for non-mobile babies

Babies cannot be expected to develop motor skills without the time and freedom to do so. ~ Janet Lansbury



Region 4 Infant Toddler Technical Assistance Center Partners



Child Care Council
of the North Country



Child Care Council
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Capital District
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Resources:

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Moving Smart. (November 22, 2010). *Kids Need Room to Move!* Retrieved from: movingsmartblog.blogspot.com/2010/11/give-your-child-floor_23.html?spref=tw

Pikler, Emmi, From *Peaceful Babies-Contented Mothers* in the Sensory Awareness Foundation Bulletin, Number 14, Winter 1994, p12. For more information go to www.RIE.org