



## Birth–12 Months

### Physical/Health: Gross Motor Development<sup>1</sup>

**WHEN INTRODUCED:** Block 1

**BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE<sup>2</sup>**

- Rolling over
- Lifting up while on tummy
- Engaging in creeping, crawling, sitting, standing, or walking

### EXAMPLES OF OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Behaviors may be observed during a care routine, such as a mealtime or diaper change; playtime; or during a guided activity, including a book sharing. Pertinent ELM activities (Physical/Health) are cited in parentheses.

#### Rolling over

- Positions body to begin rolling over (Block 3, Option 1)
- Rolls over (Block 13, Option 1)
- Reaches and rolls over (Block 17, Option 1)

#### Lifting up while on tummy

- Balances and controls body during tummy time (Block 1, Option 1)
- Lifts head and shoulders (Block 3, Option 1)
- Holds up head and pushes up (Block 13, Option 1)

#### Creeping or crawling<sup>3</sup>

- Shows emerging readiness to crawl (Block 3, Option 2)<sup>4</sup>
- Partially or fully engages in creeping or crawling toward a desired object(s) (Block 1, Option 2; Block 15, Option 1; Block 22, Option 1; Block 25, Option 2)
- Supports body with one arm while using the opposite arm to reach for an object
- Pushes an object while creeping or crawling (Block 15, Option 2)
- Crawls over (up/down) a low foam shape (Block 13, Option 2)
- Crawls under a “bridge” (Block 17, Option 2)
- Creeps or crawls on bumpy/soft textures (Block 24, Options 1 and 2)
- Crawls as a pretend kitten (Block 17, Option 2) or zoo animal (Block 25, Option 3)



## Sitting

- Shows emerging skill in moving from creeping or crawling into a sitting position (Block 3, Option 3)<sup>5</sup>
- Balances body while sitting and engaging in up/down arm movements (Block 1, Option 3) or extending arms (Block 7, Option 2)
- Regains balance after leaning (forward, left, or right) or moving an arm(s) while in a sitting position
- Uses hands and legs to scoot forward while in a sitting position on a hard surface

## Standing

- Stands with a caregiver's support, facing the caregiver or facing away from the caregiver (Block 9, Options 1 and 2; Block 23, Option 2)
- Pulls up to stand by using a stationary object or a caregiver's body (Block 9, Option 3; Block 23, Option 3)
- Stands without support
- Regains balance after moving an arm(s) while standing without support

## Walking<sup>6</sup>

- Shows readiness to walk by cruising: moving one leg at a time sideways while holding on to a stationary object or caregiver (Block 23, Option 3)
- Walks (moves one leg forward at a time) while holding on to a stationary object or caregiver
- Walks without support
- Carries an object while walking (Block 15, Option 2)
- Walks on bumpy/soft textures (Block 24, Option 3)



## EXAMPLES OF FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

### Reintroduce

#### Rolling over

- Offer Block 3, Option 1 to promote an infant's ability to roll over.
- Place an infant on his/her back on the floor with an appealing toy(s) just beyond the infant's arm's reach to encourage the infant to roll over. Speak in a soft and friendly tone to encourage the infant to roll over.

#### Lifting up while on tummy

- Place an infant on his/her tummy to promote practice in controlling head, shoulder, and back muscles. Stay with the infant to provide gentle verbal support, including simple descriptions of what the infant is doing. See Block 1, Option 1 for helpful tips on making supervised tummy time a pleasurable experience.

#### Engaging in creeping, crawling, sitting, standing, or walking

- See Block 3, Option 2 suggestions for encouraging an infant to move into a crawling position. This activity plan also can be used to promote an infant's ability to shift weight from two arms to one arm as part of reaching for an appealing toy.
- See Block 7, Option 1 for ideas to help an infant develop his/her skills in sitting.
- Block 9, Options 1, 2, and 3 suggest ways to help an infant develop his/her ability to stand and bear weight. Option 1 is geared for an infant who can support his/her head on his/her own. Option 2 is for an infant who has some experience standing supported by the staff member. Option 3 is for an infant who has more standing experiences.
- Repeat Block 15, Option 1 to promote an infant's skill in creeping.
- Repeat Block 23, Option 3 to support an infant's experiences in pulling his/her body to a standing position or to begin to explore walking.

### Reinforce

#### Rolling over

- Put a toy of interest to an infant in the infant's line of vision but just out of reach to promote rolling and creeping. Use your voice and facial expressions to encourage the infant to keep trying.

#### Lifting up while on tummy

- Provide tummy time in fun ways to promote an infant's ability to lift his/her head, including use of arms to lift up head and shoulders.



## Engaging in creeping, crawling, sitting, standing, or walking

- Create an interesting outdoor area(s) for an infant(s) to explore.
- Play a game of chase by slowly and playfully crawling after an infant. Invite an older infant to pretend to be a familiar animal, such as a kitty or puppy.
- Describe an infant's actions as he/she attempts to change position, such as preparing to roll over. The infant may not understand your words but your enthusiasm and attention will communicate important support. Examples:
  - "Nico, you are so close to rolling over. You are on your side. Keep reaching. Today may be the day you roll over."
  - "Oh, Arianna, look at you go. You are putting your weight on your knees. You are pushing your chest off the floor. You are getting your body ready to crawl!"
  - "Wow, Isaiah. I see you are shifting your weight to your buttocks. You are figuring out how to sit down."
  - "Frances, I saw how you started to lose your balance and then you caught yourself. You are learning how to balance your body!"
- Help an infant learn to bear weight on his/her legs by supporting some or most of his/her weight while holding the infant's torso. Pay attention to the infant's cues about when to lower the infant into a lying position.
- Encourage an infant to pull up to a standing position to check out several toys you place on a cube chair or low shelf.
- Encourage an older infant(s) to reposition his/her body to be able to play with the toys that you place on a low shelf or table. An infant may move to a sitting or standing position or a standing position to play with the toys. An infant may hold on to furniture and walk sideways (cruise) to get to a desired toy.
- Offer Block 15, Option 2 to provide practice in crawling or walking while pushing or carrying an object.



## EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO ENTRIES

*Crawling is a developmental milestone we actively support in our room. Our observations of Anthony's gross motor skills indicate that he is developing crawling skills by using his arms to move forward on his belly. We are supporting his interest in crawling by putting a favorite toy in front of him so he has practice in moving toward something he likes. He smiles and laughs when he gets ahold of the toy!*

*Three times last week we observed Amelia pulling herself up to a low shelf in our room without any support from us. She is now interested in taking steps sideways while holding on to the shelf. Experts call this cruising and it often occurs before a child starts to walk independently. We are supporting Amelia's interest by staying near her to make sure she is safe, and encouraging her to move one foot at a time. She is proud of her new accomplishment!*

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### Endnotes

- 1 The categories and behaviors to observe are informed by the following sources: Adolph, K E., & Berger, S. E. (2011). Physical and motor development. In M. H. Bornstein & M. E. Lamb (Eds.), *Developmental science: Advanced textbook, 6th ed.* (pp. 241–302). New York: Psychology Press; Bricker, D., Capt, B., & Pretti-Frontczak, K. (2002). *Assessment, evaluation, and programming system for infants and children, 2nd ed., Vol. 2: Test, birth to three years and three to six years.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.; Folio, M. R., & Fewell, R. R. (2002) Peabody motor development chart. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed, Inc.
- 2 The ELM Curriculum assumes infants begin attending a child development program at six weeks of age or older. You may wish to observe gross motor behaviors that often appear during the early weeks of life. These include: kicking legs (together or separately), waving arms, bending or straightening arms, and turning head to the right and to the left.
- 3 There are individual differences in how infants begin to crawl, such as initially crawling on belly with arms/hands in front or crawling on belly with arms/hands on the side. See p. 31 of the Physical/Health section of the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months*.
- 4 Indicators of readiness to crawl include: (1) rolling from back to stomach or from stomach to back; (2) raising head and chest and supporting self with both hands when on tummy; (3) creeping forward with tummy on the floor; or (4) getting into a crawling position on hands and knees. See Be Prepared section of Block 13, Option 1.
- 5 Indicators of readiness to sit may include leaning forward and shifting weight to hands, and then shifting weight from knees to the infant's buttocks (see Block 3, Option 3). An infant may also use a stable object, such as a chair, for support while moving into a sitting position.
- 6 There is a wide range of ages—from 9–17 months in Western societies—when young children begin walking. See p. 31 of the Physical/Health section of the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months*.