# The Effects of Mother-Infant Interactions on Infants' Ability to Transition from Crawling to Walking

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The transition from crawling to walking is a crowning achievement in infancy, and typically studied as a series of motor skills. Walking independently opens up a world of possibilities, allowing infants to travel more, explore objects in new ways, and actively engage with caregivers. However, little is known about the factors that affect the transition from crawling to walking. This study examined whether mothers encourage locomotion in crawling infants during everyday activities, and whether their support predicted infants' onset of walking. Fifty mothers and their 11-month-old crawling infants were video-recorded for one hour in their homes. For every instance of locomotion, I scored whether the bout (crawling or supported walking), was infant or mother-initiated. Mothers initiated infants' locomotor bouts with language (e.g. "come here"), gestures (e.g. offer a toy to encourage infant to move), or physical support (e.g. physically supporting infants). Families were contacted when infants were 13 months old, when about half had transitioned to walking. At 11 months, most bouts were infant-initiated. However, within bouts where mothers provided support, encouragement of upright bouts at 11 months predicted infants' locomotor status at 13 months. These findings illustrate a developmenta cascade, whereby developmental change is brought about by changes in other aspects of development. This study shows the first link, between social context—everyday parenting expectations and behavior— and the transition from crawling to walking.

**Awards Won:**