

Recommendations regarding Baby Walkers

- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents actively discourages the use of baby walkers because of the high number of accidents associated with their use and the lack of any evidence that they assist a baby's development.
- The Child Accident Prevention Trust recommends against the use of baby walkers as they can lead infants into dangerous situations.
- The Scottish Health Visitors Association considers baby walkers to be dangerous because of the potential for injury resulting from accidents occurring; Health Visitors advise carers not to use them. If carers have to use baby walkers they are asked to be very careful when they are in use. Prolonged use can also affect skeletal development.
- The American Academy of Paediatrics has recommended a ban on baby walkers since 1995, and over the years has petitioned the US Consumer Product safety Commission (CPSC), but to no avail. The CPSC has worked with manufacturers on voluntary safety features, but the wheeled walkers are still sold. Parents may be aware of the dangers associated with baby walkers, but infants continue to sustain injuries in walkers even under supervision. Instead of wheeled baby walkers, the AAP encourages parents to use safer alternatives such as stationary activity centres.
- The Royal Plunket Society in New Zealand strongly advocates against the use of baby walkers. Many people do not realise how dangerous they can be and tend to use them as a convenient baby-sitting tool. Baby walkers do not help a child develop. A child should be able to crawl, stand, walk, and begin exploring at their own pace and not be forced into dangerous situations. Plunket has long advocated that parents and caregivers realise the danger they are placing their young children in.
- Allyson Hewitt, Executive Director, Safe Kids Canada, June 2 2003
'Baby walkers should be banned. It should be illegal to sell them in Canada...they cause more serious injuries than any other children's product. 'There's no such thing as a safe baby walker.' 'A child in a walker can cover one metre per second —faster than it takes for a parent to respond. Nature never meant for babies to have that much mobility. They're not ready for the risks involved.'
'No baby walkers should be used; they should all be destroyed so other families cannot reuse them.'
- SWERCOTS- South West of England Regional Co-ordination of Trading Standards 'Buy Wise – Be Safe' (Launched at Conference, Edinburgh, 2003
Baby walkers are associated with more injuries than any other type of nursery equipment. There is no evidence that they help babies learn to walk any sooner than they might otherwise do. They allow babies to move very quickly

and make them harder to supervise. They also raise them to a height where they can reach for hazardous items such as knives and hot drinks. In 1999 over 3,300 babies were taken to hospital after being injured while in a baby walker.'

- Garrett M, McElroy AM, Staines A. *BMJ* 2002; 324(7352):1494
The use of baby walkers should be discouraged. 'If parents are intent on using baby walkers it is important that they fit safety guards and locks around the home so that the risk of accidents is minimised as much as possible.'
- Canadian Paediatric Society 2002
'The group is relieved the federal government has finally moved to ban the items (baby walkers).
'People who have baby walkers are asked to permanently dismantle and dispose of them.'
- Australian Consumers Association 09/02
'We strongly recommend that you **don't** use a baby walker for your child.'
'The Australian Consumer's Association calls on governments throughout Australia to ban these useless and dangerous products.'
- 'Injury caused by baby walkers: the predicted outcomes of mandatory regulations', Peter G. Thomson, Injury Epidemiologist, South Australian Department of Human Services, Adelaide, SA, 'MJA', Vol 177, 2002
'The New South Wales regulation has the potential to eliminate only half of the baby-walker injuries. Banning baby-walkers altogether is preferable.'
- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) 2000
The Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) called for a ban on baby walkers at their annual conference 2000.
- Denise Kendrick, Patricia Marsh 1998, 'Injury Prevention' 1998; 4:295-298
'Health professionals should support campaigns to limit the sale of baby walkers; they should ascertain each family's reasons for walker use; try to find acceptable alternatives. They should make the family aware of properly fitted stair gates/ fireguards; help family to obtain / use such items of safety equipment'.
- O. C. S. Cassell, M. Hubble, M. A. P. Milling and W. A. Dickson 'Burns' Vol. 23, No 5, pp451-453, 1997.¹² Simkiss MJ, Raikes AS. 'Problems resulting from the excessive use of baby walkers and baby bouncers'. 'Lancet 1972;1:747'³ Stoffman JM, Bass MJ, Fox AM. 'Head Injuries related to the use of baby walkers'. 'Can Med Assoc J'.
'We can only suggest that the British Burns Association joins the American Academy and the Canadian Medical Association in recommending a ban on this inherently dangerous product (baby walkers).'
- 'Baby walkers – an underestimated hazard for our children', Mayr J, Gaisl M., Purtscher K., Noeres H., Schimpl G., Fasching G., Universitartschlinik fur Kinderchirurgie, Landeskrankenhaus, Austria; 'European Journal of Paediatrics, 153(7):531-4, 1994 Jul.

'We recommend a general ban on the sale and manufacture of baby walkers.'

- 'Keeping Kids Safe – Activities and Information For Parents' Groups', Child Accident Prevention Trust, 1993.

'Baby walkers can walk small children into dangerous situations- they are best avoided altogether.'

- 'Accident Prevention in Day Care And Play settings: A Practical Guide', Child Accident Prevention Trust, 1992.

'Baby walkers are **not** recommended.'

- 'Baby walker frames: a preventable factor in infant burns" M. Meyer, St Andrew's Hospital, Billericay, Essex, UK, 'Burns', (1988) 14, (2), 45-146.

'I doubt whether the child deprived of a baby walker would be handicapped, and therefore there is an argument for prohibiting their sale or at very least warning parents of their dangers'.