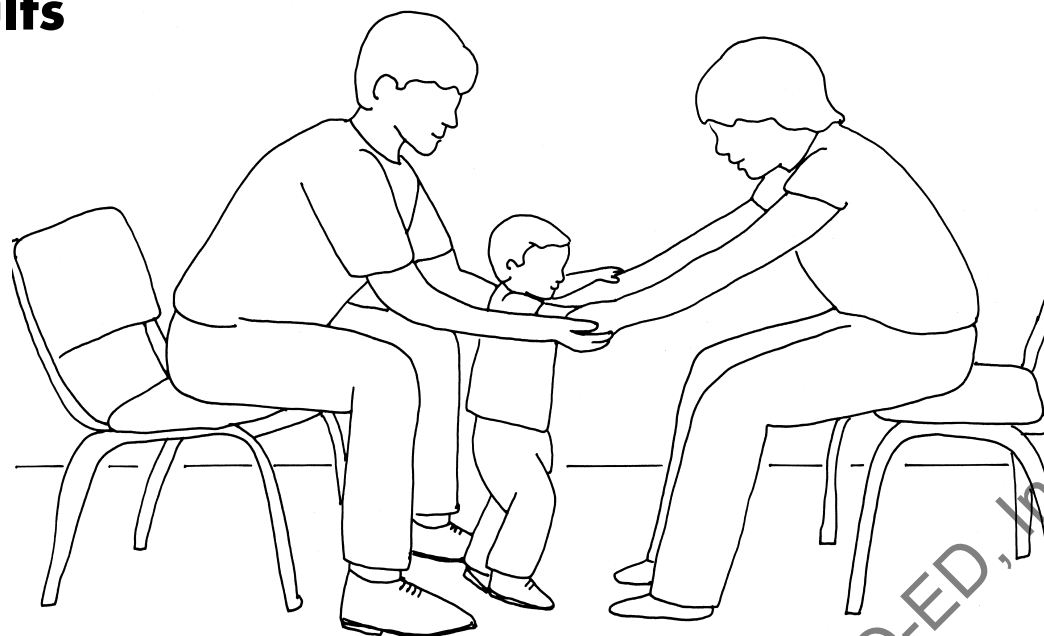


Child Walking Between the Arms of Two Adults



Set up two chairs facing one another. Sit in one chair and have the child stand and face away from you. Have the other adult sit in the other chair and the both of you can clasp hands and arms together to make parallel bars for the child to walk between. Encourage the child to hold onto your arms and walk to the other adult. Once the child walks to the other adult, encourage the child to turn around and walk back to you.

Encourage

- Head upright, in line with the body, chin tucked
- Body upright and straight
- Hips and legs straight, legs together
- Feet flat on the floor, facing straight ahead
- Shoulders over hips, hips over knees, and knees over feet
- Arms forward and holding on for support

Helps to

- Develop muscles of the body, back, hips, legs, and feet
- Develop balance control of the body, legs, and feet
- Allow the child to experience body weight over the feet
- Develop strength and stability in the arms
- Develop confidence and independence with walking

Play Ideas

Every time the child walks to you or the other adult, reward the child with a kiss or a big hug. When the child can easily walk between your arms, you and the other adult can slowly move your chairs apart until you are holding on with your fingertips to increase the distance that the child walks. You can further challenge the child by moving your chairs apart so that your arms are reaching out but not touching. You can have the child try to take one or two steps independently in order to reach the arms of the other adult. Continue to reward the child's efforts with hugs and kisses!

Notes for Therapists

This activity is excellent for children who are just learning to walk, but need extra support and confidence for balancing. The ability to walk independently requires the child to balance using an alternating base of support of both feet and one foot (when taking a step). When the child uses his or her arms to hold onto the adult's arms, the child's arms become part of the base of support and add security for balancing. However, for the eventual ability to walk independently, the child needs to learn to balance on the feet without the use of the arms for support. The child will need to have the arms free to develop the alternating arm swing motion for walking.