

THE FIRST YEAR - CRAWLING, PULLING UP, STANDING

Children who have freedom of movement feel they can pursue their own ideas and interests. The repeated experience of seeing an object, reaching for it and exploring it with the hands and mouth, produces the reassuring sensation that when we want something we can move and go and get it. This is how a healthy ego develops, a human being capable of dealing successfully with the problems of life.

Self-confidence is an internal feeling of being able to rely on one's own resources, which comes from the experience of active work done in the environment using free movement. It is the sensation of personal power in solving problems, and this feeling of power remains in a person forever. In

the future, the aims will change (from reaching an interesting object, such as a colored ball, to doing school homework, and so on) but the psychological situation remains the same; something interests you, you need to do something to satisfy this interest, and you are confident that you have the ability to do so.

Active movements in the first months of life provide the overall mind-body experience from which self-confidence is derived, and with this very valuable instrument, it is possible to face all the challenges of life.

—Dr. Silvana Montanaro, MD
Montessori 0-3 teacher trainer

Looking at and studying the environment visually comes first, then the desire to reach and touch it. Parents are often amazed to see how focused a child can become

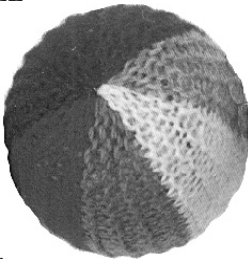
when concentration is not interrupted. One mother, taking a baby for a walk in a stroller, noticed that he was staring at a poster on a building. When the mother started to leave the baby cried, so the mother allowed him to continue looking at the poster. Twenty-two minutes (!) that baby studied it— then sighed happily.



The sea, a lovely place for my first nature walk.

KNITTED BALL

Considered essential material in the Montessori 0-3 training, this is the first, the slowest rolling ball for the crawling child.

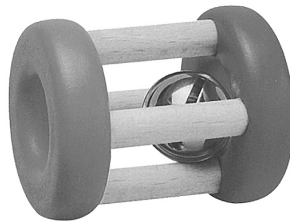


It is hand-made of colorful wool yarn, each one slightly different.

The large knitted ball is about 4" in diameter; the small knitted ball is 3" in diameter.

They should be handwashed in cool water with a wool soap, rung out by hand, and cool or air dried. Made in England.

BR090 Large Knitted Ball \$13.50
BR092 Small Knitted Ball \$11.00



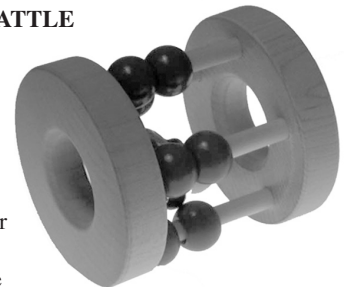
BELL RATTLE

A European favorite for many years, this bright red, shiny, wooden rattle with a silver bell can be shaken to make the bell rattle, and also rolled and chased. The length is 2.85" and the diameter 2." Made in Germany.

BT011 \$11.00

ROLLING BEAD RATTLE

A solid wood rattle containing one large silver bell and 12 colorful beads. A variety of rolling rattles is important to inspire the child to crawl toward the rolling toy. Later she will move the colored beads back and forth on the wooden dowels to explore what she can do with her hands. This rolling bead rattle is 3" long. Made in the USA.



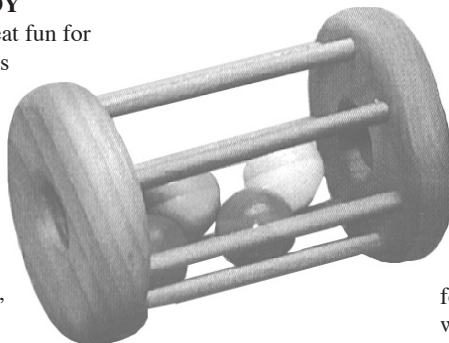
BR330

\$11.00

LARGE ROLLING BALL TOY

Just like balls, a rolling toy is great fun for the child who is making some progress in learning to crawl. It continues to roll just out of reach, but at a speed that makes it enjoyable for the child to crawl after it. This one makes the sound of wood clacking against wood as the wooden balls roll around inside. It is made of oiled natural wood, with four brightly painted balls, 6" long. Made in the USA.

BR13 \$17.50



FLATBED TRUCK

Wheels are infinitely interesting to many children at an early age. This toy provides the transition from traditional rolling toys to the use of wheels, and the child's first vehicle. This first truck is lovingly made here in the Northwest of the USA by a family who has been creating beautiful wooden toys, first for their own children, for over twenty years. They use a variety of wood: alder, poplar, walnut, and birch. The truck is 5" long, 3" tall.

BR400

\$23.00

FIRST YEAR - CRAWLING, PULLING UP, STANDING

and looked away. What was he thinking? What was he doing? It was important.

One of the most thrilling achievements for a child is learning to move himself through space to get to a desired object. Infants have many different ways of doing this—backwards, tummy on the ground, sideways, creeping, crawling, rolling, lifting tummy alternately with arms and legs. This is important work!

Sometimes a child grunts or yells as he works, or falls asleep for a few seconds between “push-ups.” The child enjoys the process of experimenting and learning as much as he enjoys the final success of being able to crawl.

We can help the child in this valuable work by not interrupting him as he works and by offering balls and toys that roll at a slow pace, are interesting to look at, touch, feel and listen to. If the toy moves too far too quickly the child will give up,

and if it does not move at all there will be no challenge.

SAFETY

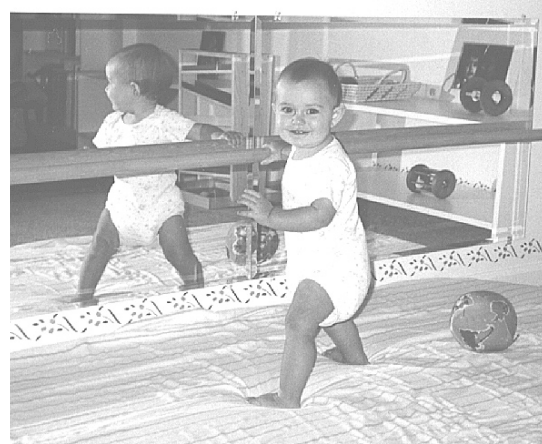
When the child begins to crawl—and one never knows at what moment, this will happen—the most important consideration is the safety of the environment for the child. We must look at the space from the child's perspective and go over it with a fine-toothed comb.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

When considering objects, a natural, supportive environment is sometimes distinguished more by what objects are left out, than by which are included. Among the items that *inhibit* natural development are: cribs, swings, jumpers, walkers, playpens, bottles,

and pacifiers.

It is comforting for a baby to be carried, held and snuggled, but we must also give the child practice each day in developing movement and other thinking



Look! I can pull myself up and walk, holding on with only one hand! (See bar and mirror below.)

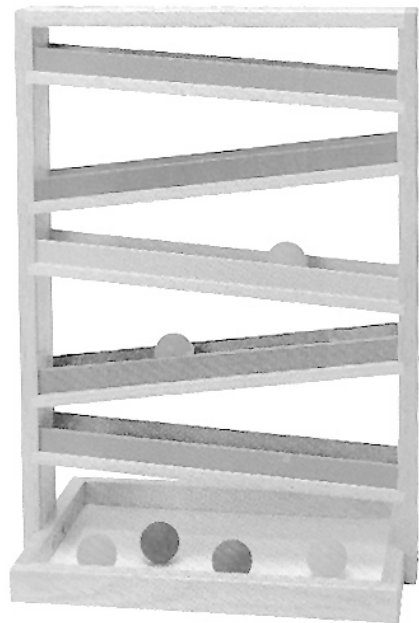


BAR AND MIRROR

This *bar and mirror*, used in the home as well as in the infant community allows the child to practice pulling up to a standing position and *cruising* or moving sideways, hand over hand, foot by foot, at anytime, without help from the adult. This is an important large motor stage in learning to walk. Practicing in front of a mirror is just that much more fun.

The child-safe acrylic mirror is 48" wide and 24" high, and the rod is made of hard maple. The Coordination mirror should be hung so that the rod is 17" from the floor. Made in the USA.

BA520 \$175.00



BALL TRACKER

At first the child will sit in front of the ball tracker and place the balls just on the first or lowest rod. Gradually she will want to reach the top as she sees other children, or her parents doing. This encourages her to pull up and stand in order to do the work.

This important piece of material has been used in Montessori infant communities for many years. The large base, ten by fifteen inches, provides stability as the child reaches for the higher ramps. Placed in the hole on the top, the soft rubber ball moves slowly enough for the child to follow it, or *track* it, with her eyes. Tracking movements of the eyes are important for later reading and writing. This fascinating activity, repeated over and over by the child, has a calming and satisfying effect. All wood, 23" tall, 15.5" wide. Made in the USA.

BT09 Ball Tracker & 6 balls \$88.00

BT099 Set of 4 Extra Balls \$17.00

HUMMING TOP

For the development of eyes, the child is able to practice "tracking" as the top (operated by the adult) moves across the floor, attracting attention by the whirring sound, the movement, and the color.



Soon the child will learn to hold and move the handle up and down, faster and faster, making the "song" just like the adult or older child. This metal and plastic version is 6" high and comes in assorted colors and designs. Made in China, lead tested.

CT506 \$10.00

FIRST YEAR - CRAWLING, PULLING UP, STANDING

abilities—exploring the environment visually, listening to sounds, exercising, sleeping and waking according to need, crawling, pulling up, cruising by holding on to a piece of furniture, and walking.

A natural environment for a baby is one which provides wise and observant adults or older children, and an interesting and safe space for the infant to rest, explore, and develop abilities.

PULLING UP, STANDING, AND WALKING

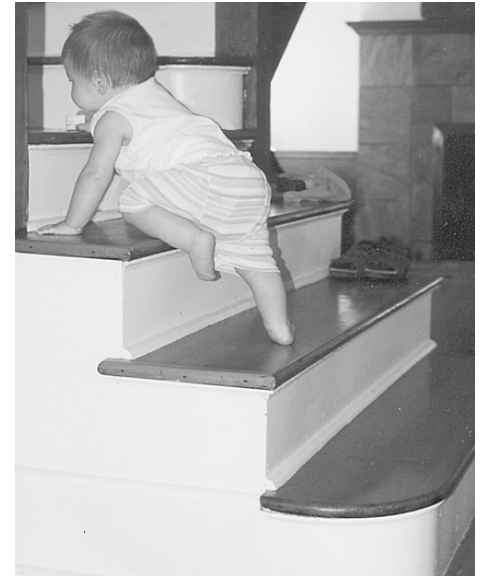
Each child has an internal timetable of physical development which guides him in knowing just the right time to begin to pull himself up and to stand, and for how long to practice these abilities each day.

When we hold the child's hands to help him walk ahead of his optimum time we are giving a subtle message that we

are not satisfied with his own timetable and abilities, or that we want him to hurry up. This can make a child frustrated at his own attempts. It is better just to wait, to watch, to enjoy the unfolding unique growth of the child as he follows his inner guide.

Carrying a child for too long during the day can make her dependent on an adult, and dissatisfied with her own effort, to get around and to observe the world.

Walkers, and other commercially available movement aids hinder development in the same way. They make a child mobile so quickly that she sometimes just gives up on her own attempts when outside the walker. They also give the child misinformation about where his "space" or body ends, and how legs really work, confusing messages that have to be relearned later. The following is a quote from a San Francisco paper:



Stairs provide wonderful development of movement exercise, with adult supervision and adult lessons on coming "down" the stairs!

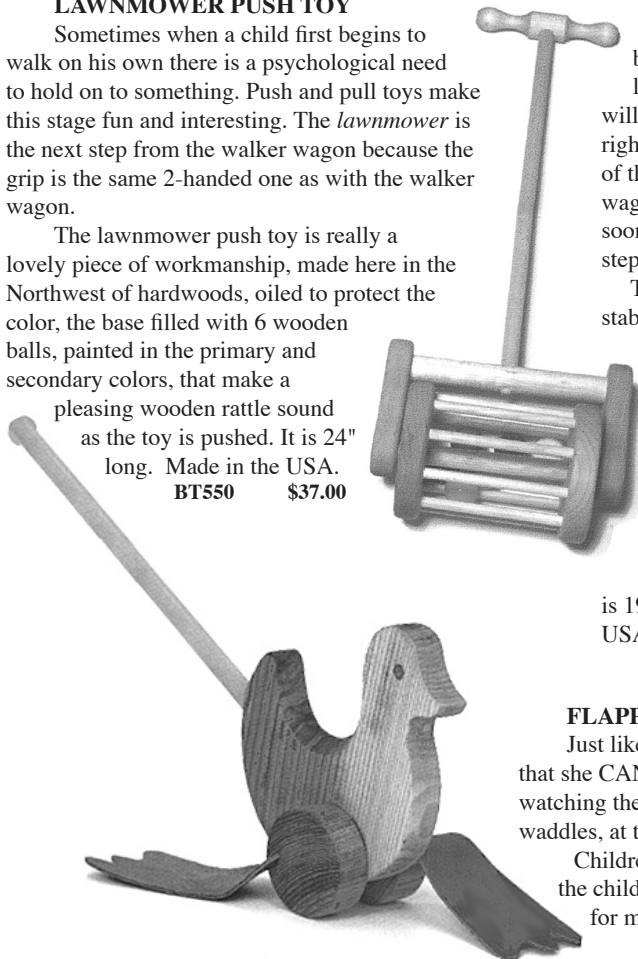
LAWNMOWER PUSH TOY

Sometimes when a child first begins to walk on his own there is a psychological need to hold on to something. Push and pull toys make this stage fun and interesting. The *lawnmower* is the next step from the walker wagon because the grip is the same 2-handed one as with the walker wagon.

The lawnmower push toy is really a lovely piece of workmanship, made here in the Northwest of hardwoods, oiled to protect the color, the base filled with 6 wooden balls, painted in the primary and secondary colors, that make a

pleasing wooden rattle sound as the toy is pushed. It is 24" long. Made in the USA.

BT550 \$37.00

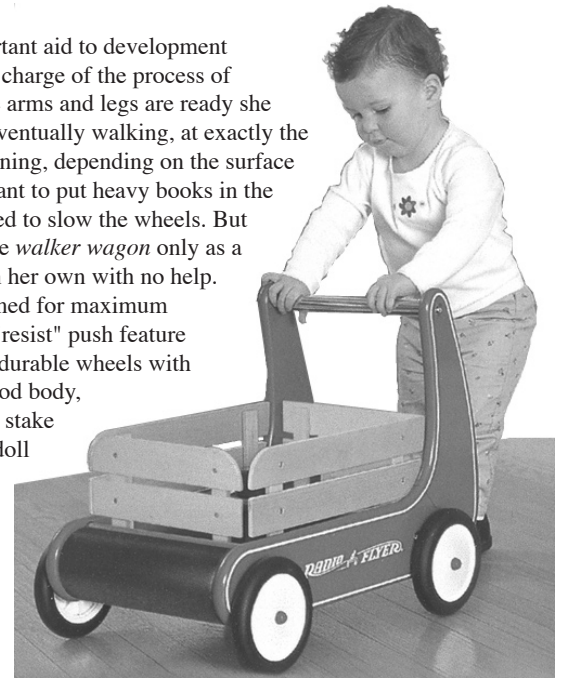


WALKER WAGON

This vehicle is an important aid to development because it puts the child in charge of the process of learning to walk. When the arms and legs are ready she will practice pulling up, and eventually walking, at exactly the right time for her. In the beginning, depending on the surface of the floor, the adult might want to put heavy books in the wagon if more weight is needed to slow the wheels. But soon the child will be using the *walker wagon* only as a stepping stone to taking off on her own with no help.

The *walker wagon* is designed for maximum stability. It has an innovative "resist" push feature for beginning walkers, durable wheels with grip tread, a natural wood body, and removable wooden stake sides for later use as a doll buggy and wagon. It can be used inside or outside. The body is 20" x 12" x 15.5"; the metal handle height is 19". Made in China for a USA company.

BT136 \$122.00



FLAPPY DUCK PUSH TOY

Just like the *lawnmower*, the *flappy duck*, provides security as the child gradually learns that she CAN walk, but still wants to hold on to something. There is an added challenge of watching the "flaps" (the feet) to figure out where the flapping sound is coming from as the duck waddles, at the same time as walking.

Children love the funny "flap" sound the *flappy duck* makes as it waddles along in front of the child. This unique traditional push toy comes from England where it has been a favorite for many years. Natural wood with leather "flaps". It is 24" in length.

BT080 \$38.00

BABY WALKERS

BANNED AT DAY CARE CENTERS

The American Academy of Pediatrics has concluded that baby walkers are dangerous and should not be sold or distributed in the U.S.A. . . . In 1991, 27,800 children under the age of two years were admitted to a hospital emergency room for injuries associated with a baby walker.

The most important thing we can provide is a low bar attached to the wall, or a heavy and stable piece of furniture for safely pulling up and "cruising" sideways. A heavy wagon with a sturdy vertical handle is the best "walker" for an infant to practice walking whenever they wish. It is very rewarding to see the confidence, balance, poise, and the physical prowess of a child who has been allowed to develop in a natural way according to his own efforts.

TOYS AND EQUIPMENT THAT AID MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Rolling toys and soft balls that only move a short distance give children a challenge to move forward in space.

A bar attached to the wall of the child's room, or a garden wall in warm weather, helps the child to be able to pull up at will, whenever it is the best time for her to practice, and to remain standing until she is ready to sit back down.

A stool or sturdy low table, or a sofa in the living room, are excellent for enabling the child to "cruise" or practice walking while holding on.

A *walker wagon* (page 15) will provide an opportunity for the child to pull up and practice walking at will, but it

will usually require the adult to turn the wagon around when the child reaches the end of the path at first. Push and pull toys are great fun for the new walker.

None of these things rush the child, but they all help give the opportunity for practice at the perfect time.



Nature: what a wonderful place to practice walking.

NOTE: Just like *push toys*, *pull toys* encourage and provide security for children just learning to walk.



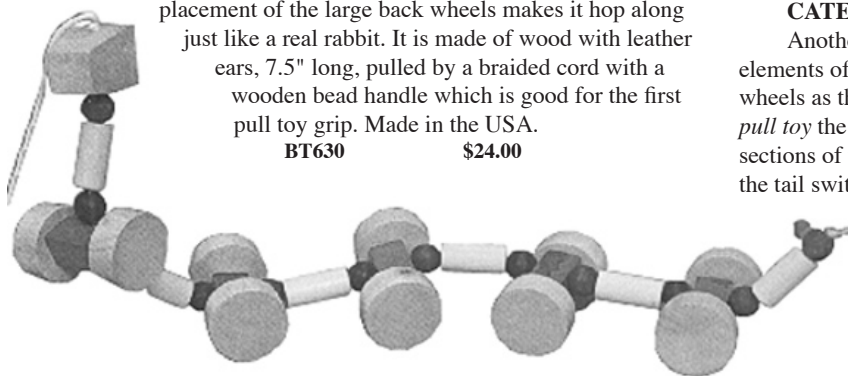
HOPPING RABBIT PULL TOY

There is a reason pull

toys have survived as favorite toys throughout the years and across the globe! They entertain children, especially those practicing walking while doing something else at the same time.

When the hopping rabbit is pulled, the special placement of the large back wheels makes it hop along just like a real rabbit. It is made of wood with leather ears, 7.5" long, pulled by a braided cord with a wooden bead handle which is good for the first pull toy grip. Made in the USA.

BT630 \$24.00

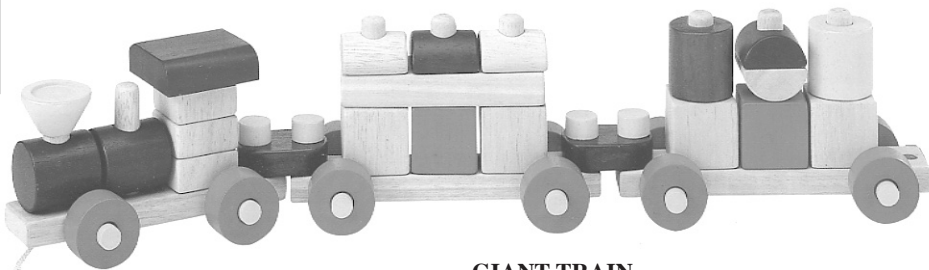


CATERPULLER PULL TOY

Another favorite for many years. One of the most interesting elements of pull toys is the variation in ways that they move on their wheels as they are pulled along by the young child. In this *caterpuller pull toy* the pairs of natural wheels are attached in such a way that the sections of the red-green-blue-yellow body moves back and forth, and the tail switches from side to side as it is pulled along. Children find this very funny and enjoy making people laugh as they pull the toy.

This handmade wooden toy was invented in the Waldorf Camphill villages in England. 21" long.

BT11 \$29.00



GIANT TRAIN

This is the most impressive and most interesting pull toy that will interest the child for several years. It is 28 inches long and consists of an engine and two cars. We recommend introducing just the engine at first as a pull toy, and later all of the cars as both a pull toy and a puzzle toy that gives the child unlimited scope to exercise the imagination. It is made of wood and some of the parts left natural, some painted in bold colors. Made in Thailand.

BT575 \$44.00

