Moving and Grooving

By 12 months, your growing baby...

- stands alone for three to five seconds
- may choose to "bear crawl" on feet and hands
- enjoys walking with hands held
- stands up by kneeling and lifting one foot vs. dragging legs underneath

Gross Motor Development

card 34

Strategies to Share

• You may notice that your child now wants to move and does not want to stay still. This is an exciting part of development and your home may need a good safety check up. Look at the "Keeping Your Mobile Baby Safe at PLAY" in the **Beyond My Play** section for a thorough checklist of things to think about.

• Playing "Pat-a-cake", asking her to "give you five," or participating in songs that use hand gestures ("If You're Happy and You Know It", "Itsy Bitsy Spider") will interest your child while requiring her to use her hands for play—and not to support herself in standing.

• If you notice your child crawling on hands and feet (sometimes known as "bear crawling") do not be concerned. This is a normal progression of crawling prior to walking for some, but not all, children.

• Encourage your little explorer by continuing to hold hands to stand and walk. If your child has progressed well, stand behind her and place your index fingers under her armpits to support her with steps toward another adult without requiring her to hold onto something. This is a great option because as she progresses, you can gradually remove your fingers and she is likely not to notice! You can also try using a long scarf or stretchy tights draped under her arms while you hold the ends overhead. Start with a firm hold and gradually decrease support as she gains confidence. Use the scarf to slowly shift her side to side and help her make forward progress by taking steps.

• Play in a kneeling position is an important and fun activity. Weight bearing through her legs this way not only makes her hips more stable, but also prepares her for walking. You can encourage this by placing a couch cushion or large, firm pillow on the floor and placing favorite toys on top. Keep your hands close to her knees to prevent her from sliding to the side or having "frog legs". As she gets stronger, she'll control her movement in this direction and begin to pull up to get the toys.