



Certification Training Manual

Crawling on the Tummy: Guidelines for Best Outcomes

Crawling, in conjunction with other developmental activities, stimulates neuronal connections and organizes the pre-cortical, pons-level brain. Just as infants are not taught how to crawl, we don't teach our clients how to crawl. When first given the opportunity, babies try several techniques before attaining a "finished" crawl. In the same way, clients will experiment with many techniques before reaching their own finished crawl. The various techniques, eventually culminating in a finished crawl, reflect the growth and organization of this very deep brain area.

Guidelines for Crawling:

- The only instruction you can give to your child, or an adult client, is to keep the belly button on the ground, move forward using all parts of your body that you want. **DO NOT GIVE ANY OTHER INSTRUCTION< COACHING< OR HELPFUL HINTS.** Doing so will not only interfere with the process, but will also delay brain growth.
- Crawling should be done on a long, straight, smooth surface. Hardwood or linoleum is perfect. If your house is carpeted, you can obtain narrow pieces of vinyl (2 feet wide is adequate) and duct tape them together to create long tracks down a hallway or other long stretch in the house. This can easily be rolled up and stored when finished.
- Do NOT wear shoes or socks. This activity helps the client find and use their feet.
- Do not carry items in the hands or wear gloves or mittens. If you are playing a floor game that includes carrying a game piece, for instance, you can wear a sleeve or arm band with a pocket (such as a cell phone holder for runners) and carry items there.
- Crawling is physically demanding. When beginning, most clients cannot crawl for more than a few minutes at a time. Crawl for as long as the client can tolerate. Stamina usually increases quickly. You can divide the crawling into two segments - in the morning and afternoon, for instance.
- Crawling is boring for most children. It is not a cortical activity to be observed and corrected, so if attention can be drawn AWAY from the process by playing games, the child often grows into good form faster.

The parent or caregiver can act as a coach or cheerleader, motivating, distracting, and entertaining the person on the floor. Younger children enjoy games or simple inducements. Older children can find ways to do homework on the floor (talk to your practitioner) and adults may want to listen to podcasts, learn a foreign language, or listen to a radio program. Ask your provider for more ideas for activities.