

Floor Play

Relevant Satellite Accreditation Standards

II. Physical Environment, Equipment, and Materials

A. The environment is organized to support the activities of the program.

8. Space is available for babies to safely and freely crawl around.

15. There is play and equipment and/or materials that encourage a variety of large motor activities appropriate to the ages and interests of children in the group.



The Basics

What are infant containers? Babies spend a lot of time in infant containers. These devices are designed to help keep infants safe and occupied but ultimately limit free movement and stunt development. Some examples of infant containers include bouncers, strollers, activity chairs, car seats, infant swings, high chairs, and nursing pillows. Although babies may seem highly content, spending too much time in these devices can lead to plagiocephaly (or flat head syndrome), torticollis (painful, stiff neck), and delayed motor development. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants spend no more than **twenty minutes** at a time, **three times a day** in movement restricting equipment.

Why is floor play so important? Time spent on the floor for a baby is time spent working on the gross motor skills necessary to fully take in the world around them. Babies should experience a variety of positions throughout the day – back, tummy, and side. Tummy time, when an infant is placed on their stomach to play, is particularly important for supporting healthy physical development and minimizing risk of plagiocephaly. Infants given freedom of movement on the floor will wiggle, reach, and stretch. These skills develop into rolling and crawling, strengthening the muscles and joints in the infant's back, neck, hips, shoulders, hands, and feet. Crawling opens the world to an infant and allows them to build brain connections, explore the environment, and refine their vestibular system. Environments with safe spaces for floor play yield happy, healthy babies.

I want to learn more!

- [Out of the Container, and Onto the Floor](#) (Article)
- [Tummy Time and Infant Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review](#) (Research article)
- [Back to Sleep, Tummy to Play](#) (Article)
- [Tummy time for babies](#) (Resource)