

# Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre

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## Waive the Jolly Jumper/Exersaucer

Babies develop from the head to the toe. Everything they learn first is preparing them for the next higher skills, like crawling and walking.

Like any "keep the baby busy" device, if used sparingly and under supervision Exersaucers can be fun. A **FEW** minutes spent each day will not harm the baby.

**BUT** too much time in this important first year is neither safe nor healthy.

There are a lot of reasons to avoid Exersaucers and jolly-jumpers and other devices in which the infant must rely on outside assistance for support rather than his own creativity or initiative.

- Exersaucers, walkers and jolly jumpers reverse the normal process of development, giving the lower half of the body an ability that the upper half is not yet ready to cope with.
- These devices make babies put their weight on their legs early and often on their tippy toes. Most devices make them keep their legs spread in an unnatural position.
- Jolly-jumpers/Exersaucers can hinder the process of learning to crawl and walk. The muscles in the lower legs develop, but the trunk and upper legs and hips, which are needed for walking, do not.
- Studies have shown that infants who spend a large amount of their waking hours in jolly-jumpers (Exersaucers) may exhibit delayed motor skills, especially in learning to move from one position to another, like from lying to sitting and also learning to walk correctly.
- Exersaucers and walkers do not allow the child to see his feet, which hinders visual feedback when learning about movement.
- Infant walkers are not safe and are banned in Canada due to the serious injuries that are associated with them i.e. falls, fractures

Baby's develop beautifully without ever being in a baby device that holds their body in position it isn't yet ready to be in, which can alter and impair their physical development, which can lead to a frustrated baby , and hence frustrated parent.

It is misleading to think that these devices will help infants learn to walk. Overuse of Exersaucers and jolly-jumpers foster bad posture such as arching their backs or crunching forwards, which may delay walking.

Limiting the amount of time that infants spend in car seats, infant carriers, swings and bouncy chairs allows them to have lots of chances to develop their muscles, skills and body awareness through FLOOR TIME.



We know that too much time on the back during awake time (including car seats, carriers, swings) can put infant at risk for developmental delay and developing a flat head (plagiocephaly). BACK TO SLEEP, TUMMY TIME FOR PLAY is the current recommendation of the Canadian Pediatric Society

### **INFANTS WHO SHOULD NOT BE PLACED IN A WALKER/ JUMPER/ EXERSAUCER**

- Premature infants
- Infants who put weight only on their toes
- Infants who are "floppy"
- Infants who are "stiff"
- Infants with a developmental delay i.e. cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome etc without the direction of a physical or occupational therapist
- Infants with hip dysplasia (dislocated or subluxated hips), clubfoot or any other orthopaedic condition. Consult their physician first