



Coping with “Carry Me”

If a child, who was happy to begin walking last month, now wants to be carried more than usual, it may mean he is feeling insecure. This is a normal phase. New and unfamiliar events —such as moving to a bigger bed, starting a new preschool or adjusting to a new baby in the family, can trigger a need for reassurance.

What You Can Do

- **Spend more time together** and be sure to include lots of hugs and cuddling.
- **Find a middle ground.** Help your child adjust by finding an option in between walking and being carried. A stroller is good to have as a backup so your child can walk part time and ride part time. Or, he may even want to push the stroller with his favorite toy in it.
- **Be aware of distances.** Children’s shorter legs have to work harder to cover the same distance as you. Don’t ask your child to walk too long.
- **Be firm, but encouraging.** If he asks to be picked up at times when you can’t carry him, you might say, “Mommy loves you. I can’t carry you right now, but I really want to hold your hand.” Tell him how proud you are he is such a big boy and walking.
- **Talk through the situation.** “You can walk from the car to the store and then, if you want to, you can ride in the cart. You are so good at knowing when you need to rest.” When we tell a child he *needs* to walk, it may feel too overwhelming. Talking about choices between all or nothing will help him gain needed security to get through this phase.

It is exciting for a child to learn new skills, but it can also be scary. It is important to let your child know he is loved and that you will be there for him as he takes on new challenges.