

Module: **Developmentally Appropriate Orientation and Mobility**

Session 1: Foundations of Developmentally Appropriate Orientation and Mobility

Handout G: Ways to Facilitate Ease of Movement

Lowry, S.S. (2004). *Ways to facilitate ease of movement*. Chapel Hill, NC: Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers With Visual Impairments, FPG Child Development Institute, UNC-CH.

- **Independence.** Provide appropriate supervision at all times while respecting the child's independence.
- **Predictable arrangement.** Keep furniture, equipment, and other landmarks in predictable positions. Rearrange infrequently; preferably, rearrange only one small area or piece at a time. Involve the child in rearranging or provide hands-on demonstrations of what has changed.
- **Simple verbal cues.** Use simple verbal cues to alert the child to the presence of an upcoming obstacle. Tell the child what is in front and what to do about it, for instance by saying, "The recliner is in front of you. Hands out." Physical demonstration of the hands-out position may be necessary. Avoid using vague expressions such as "Watch out" or "Be careful" that provide little useable information and may communicate fear.
- **Clear travel paths.** As much as possible, keep travel paths clear of shoes, toys, and other small objects, especially when walking is emerging or newly acquired.
- **Low-lying obstacles.** Reposition or remove low-lying obstacles (e.g., cots, children's chairs) so that they are away from travel paths.
- **Head-high obstacles.** Reposition or remove head-high obstacles (e.g., protruding wall shelves, fire extinguishers, wall-mounted pencil sharpeners, crank windows that open to the inside, adult-sized tables) so that they are away from travel paths. Consult with the OMS for setting-specific solutions to dining tables in the home.
- **Safety-proofing.** According to the needs of each family, temporarily add foam padding to the sharp edges and corners of coffee tables, hearths, etc.

- **Outdoors.** When outdoors, offer extra supervision and physical guiding as necessary around steps, curbs, sidewalk edges, ramps, holes, roots, diagonal guide wires, diagonal supports of swing sets and other equipment, head-high undersides of climbers and slides, unprotected elevated edges of climber platforms, and other low-lying and head-high hazards.
- **Unsafe areas.** Guide the child by the hand when moving past unsafe areas as needed. Ask the TVI or OMS to demonstrate an appropriately modified guide technique that involves having the child hold on to the adult, rather than the reverse. At times holding the child's hand will be necessary for compliance and expediency.