

Module: **Developmentally Appropriate Orientation and Mobility**

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## **Session 1: Foundations of Developmentally Appropriate Orientation and Mobility**

### **Study Questions and Answers for Recommended Reading E: Leong**

Leong, S. (1996). Preschool orientation and mobility: A review of the literature. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 90(2), 145-153.

1. Explain the cycle of learning produced by mobility training for preschool children with visual impairments.  
**When children with visual impairments learn to be comfortable in their environment and to move around in it, they learn cognitive and physical skills and become more motivated to move. As they gain motivation, this will continue to increase their independence and capabilities.**
2. What types of motor problems have been observed in young children with blindness?
  - **Limited swinging of the arms**
  - **Shuffling gait**
  - **Limited ability to rotate the trunk and pelvis**
  - **Need for stability from a wide support base**
  - **Poor posture**
3. What are the benefits of active, self-initiated exploration for young children with visual impairments?  
**Children who move and actively explore have exhibited more advanced spatial knowledge, better memory of spatial locations, and better ability to orient to environmental objects.**
4. Discuss two of the earliest assessment scales in the field of O&M. How do these scales generalize to preschool children with visual impairments?  
**The scale created by Lord in 1969 assessed precane O&M, self-help skills, sensory usage, movement, and turns and directions. Six years later, a measurement system called the Peabody Mobility Scale, created by Harley, Merbler, and Wood, assessed locomotion, sensory skills, concept awareness, and mobility. Although these scales were designed for children with blindness and additional disabilities, the content areas are applicable to all preschool children with visual impairments.**

5. Describe the expanded definition of orientation and mobility for infants and preschool children discussed in this article.

**In addition to sensory skills, concept development, motor skills, and formal mobility skills, the new definition includes formal orientation skills and awareness of the environment and community.**

6. What factors should be taken into consideration when selecting a mobility device for an individual child?
- **child's motor skills**
  - **child's visual abilities**
  - **availability of training with the device**
  - **cost**
  - **safety**
  - **appropriateness**
  - **adaptable features**
  - **social acceptance of the device**
7. Create a list detailing each of the three categories of mobility devices, examples, and advantages and disadvantages of each. Can you think of any that are not listed in the article?

**Infant appliances—walkers, strollers**

**Advantages**

- **provide some protection**
- **strengthen infants' legs**
- **allow infants to explore freely**
- **commercially available**

**Disadvantages**

- **may encourage inappropriate motor patterns**
- **can limit opportunities for crawling practice**
- **may cause injuries if used without supervision**

**Toys—shopping cart, lawn mower, golf club, Hula Hoop, broom**

**Advantages**

- **protect against obstacles and hazards**
- **easy to use**
- **age appropriate**
- **commercially available**
- **provide practice with gripping**

**Disadvantages**

- **not easily portable**
- **not collapsible**

- not durable
- not tactually sensitive
- require transition period before cane use

**Adaptive mobility devices (precanes): two-pronged hooked cane, Hula Hoop, swivel-wheeled cane, T-bar bumper**

**Advantages**

- protect against obstacles and hazards
- easy to use
- more durable than toys
- tactually sensitive

**Disadvantages**

- subjective studies do not provide accurate data
- require some training
- not as readily available as toys
- make child look more impaired

**Long canes**

**Advantages**

- protect against obstacles and hazards
- tactually sensitive
- durable
- collapsible
- offer auditory and tactile feedback

**Disadvantages**

- require training
- not as readily available as toys
- may not be appropriate for very young children

8. Briefly identify those who are major proponents of long cane instruction for preschoolers and why they prefer long canes over precane devices.

**Authors who have written in support of long canes include Pogrund and Rosen, Schroeder, Willoughby and Duffy, and Wurzbarger. These experts believe that preschoolers should be trained primarily with long canes because they have all of advantages of precanes and more. They argue that long canes are more durable, portable, and tactually sensitive. Because most of the preschoolers with visual impairments will grow up to use long canes as their primary mobility device, it makes sense to begin training early so that children can feel more comfortable and build long canes into their self-image. The supporters state that long canes provide more hands-on experiences and require skills similar to those needed to use precane devices.**