

Module: **Developmentally Appropriate Orientation and Mobility**

Session 1: Foundations of Developmentally Appropriate Orientation and Mobility

Study Questions and Answers for Recommended Reading G: Perla & Ducret

Perla, F., & Ducret, W.D. (1999). Guidelines for teaching orientation and mobility to children with multiple disabilities. *RE:view*, 31(3), 113-120.

1. Describe the communication difficulties that OMSs might encounter when working with children who have multiple disabilities. List ideas for overcoming these difficulties.
Children with visual impairments and multiple disabilities may have difficulty appropriately answering questions, providing information to the OMS, or performing independent activities. Without further observation, poor responses can lead the OMS to believe that children do not have particular capabilities. In order to overcome these communication difficulties, it is important to a) get to know the child and establish a trusting relationship before the assessment and b) perform the assessment with a caregiver or other individual that the child already knows and trusts. Other effective steps include using informal assessments, allowing extra time for the child to respond, learning to read gestures and body language, and allowing the child to have control over the interaction.
2. List the seven basic needs for a comprehensive mobility plan for all children.
 - **Need to feel safe**
 - **Need to communicate**
 - **Need for control**
 - **Need for contact with the physical environment**
 - **Need for independent movement**
 - **Need for consistency and routine**
 - **Need for meaningful mobility**
3. How can overprotection of a child be as dangerous as unsupervised travel? Why are safety and independence important for children with multiple disabilities?
When children are supervised and cared for constantly, they lose opportunities to perform tasks independently and to learn new concepts about the environment. Lack of freedom can inhibit the development of self-esteem and cause the child to become more dependent on the caregiver than

necessary. Conversely, children with multiple disabilities should not be left unsupervised for long periods of time and may not be capable of traveling safely on their own. Therefore, it is necessary to create a balance between the two extremes so that the child can feel secure and autonomous.

4. How does travel for children with multiple disabilities relate to a need for control?
Children who have multiple disabilities are often transported in wheelchairs or vehicles to and from destinations by their caregivers. As a result, they tend to have fewer experiences with the critical thinking involved in travel and do not have control over where they are going. It is important for the OMS and caregivers to actively involve children in the process of traveling by allowing them to decide where to go next in order to reach a destination and by having them answer questions about the route. This will provide children with a sense of control and will increase their independence.

5. Describe the benefits of having physical contact with the environment and simple modifications that can assist children with this type of contact.
Physical contact allows children to feel secure and to feel oriented in space. Some simple methods of contact for children with multiple disabilities include trailing independently, trailing while using a modified guide technique when necessary, and trailing with a long object or toy instead of with the hand—a technique especially useful for children in wheelchairs and those who are tactually sensitive.

6. How should an OMS encourage a child to move independently?
OMSs should identify motivating people, objects, or activities within children’s environments so they will be motivated to move toward them.

7. Describe the characteristics of a meaningful mobility activity.
 - **Meaningful to the child**
 - **Allows the child to have control and some degree of independence**
 - **Useful in different environments**
 - **Age appropriate and developmentally appropriate**
 - **Fun and motivating**

8. Choose one example from the vignettes in the article and discuss why it is interesting or meaningful to you.
Participants’ answers will vary.