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| Vermont Early Mobility logo |  | VERMONT EARLY MOBILITY TIP SHEETS |

GETTING STARTED WITH POWER MOBILITY

# GET READY

Power mobility involves the full range of a child’s skills, and the **whole team’s** participation.

## **WHO:**

* Who is responsible for teaching your child, training the team, practicing with the student, knowing the vehicle, and charging and maintaining the vehicle?

### WHERE:

* Where will the vehicle be used? Classroom? Playground? Transitions? Home? And where will it be stored and charged?

### WHEN:

* When does it make the most sense in the child’s schedule to use the vehicle?

### WHAT:

* What are we doing for safety? What is the evacuation plan? What do we need to teach the “rules of the road” to child and peers?

### HOW:

* How are we monitoring progress? Planning what’s next? Moving toward increased participation?

# GET SET

### SET UP THE ENVIRONMENT FOR SAFETY.

* Evaluate the environment for the access needs of your child and the vehicle.
* Offer your child the opportunity to explore and get comfortable with the vehicle, and to see the vehicle move, before placing your child in the vehicle.
* Decide with your team on **common language** to use when talking about the vehicle with your child.
* “On” and “Off” are suggested as terms for the adult turning the vehicle’s power on and off, Go and Stop as terms for the child activating the vehicle.
  + For example: “The car is on. You can go.” “You made the car stop.” and “I turned the car off, it will not go.”
* Think about labels for moving, including directions and concepts like on, in, and around. This can help you narrate what your child is doing while moving.

# GO!

Experience the joy of self-directed movement! Create opportunities for **exploration and errorless learning**.

Do not place expectations on where the child will go/explore. Movement of any sort is the goal, not going toward something or someone. Practice in more than one place.

### KEEP GOING:

* **Keep sessions short and positive!** This is exciting but can be a lot of work, and a lot of new sensory input, for many children.
* **Moving forward is the first step in directed movement,** when your child seems interested in moving toward something. Your child cannot see behind themselves, so going backwards can be dangerous.
* **Allow time for problem solving!** And grace for little bumps in the road. It’s ok; everyone is learning.
* **Use hand** **under hand support** if your child is stuck or asks for help, or if physical cueing is needed. This will help build your child’s awareness of how their movement makes their vehicle move.
* **You may need to provide the** **cueing at a different body part, depending on your child’s needs.**  For example, prompting at the elbow toward the joystick.
* Look toward how the vehicle can be used across the range of your child’s life and activities.
* **Use what you know about your child’s interests and profile to expand the environment.** Add activities as their skill in vehicle control grows.
* **Be intentional about introducing novelty.**
* **If your child uses a communication system, high or low tech**: be strategic in identifying how they will be able to safely access it from their vehicle. This is likely to change over time.