



# 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.