

Advisory Teaching Service

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Getting around school with a Walking Aid

Information and advice for schools and settings



Advisory Teaching Service

PD Team



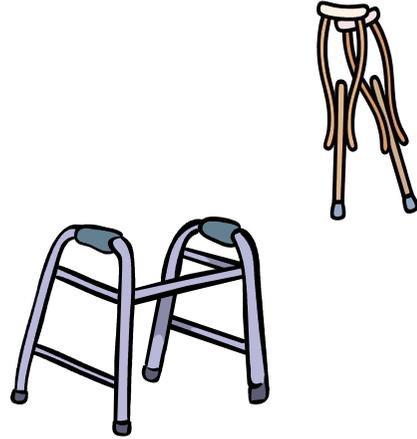
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What is a walking aid?

Any piece of equipment which helps a child to walk, including:

- Walking sticks
- Elbow crutches
- Rollators
- Walking frames
- Walking poles
- Canadian crutches



When are they used?

- Some children will always rely on a walking aid when moving
- Other children will only use a walking aid when they need to.
- Some children will use a walking aid for a short period of time, e.g. following an operation



What to do in an emergency?

- Consider exits specifically in the event of a fire, carefully develop a whole school policy.
- In case the walking aid breaks, contact:

- In case of a fall plan how best to help the child. Consider manual handling issues carefully, e.g. could a stool or handling belt help the child to regain a standing position.
- Remember to give the child time to sit and sort themselves out.



Things to consider in school

Assembly

Plan how your pupil will participate.
How will they stand for hymns?
Will they sit on a chair?
How will they collect rewards or certificates?
Where will you place their walking aid?
Who will get it after assembly?

Cloakrooms

Can your child reach their coat peg?
Is their room for them to put coats on?
Do they need help with their coat?
Do you encourage pupils to hang coats up or are they a hazard on the floor?
Can pupil reach their PE bag/lunchbox?
And so on

Playtimes

Can the pupil manage the doors to the playground?
Do they need help?
Is there somewhere to sit down?
Is there access to play equipment?
How can you facilitate playground participation?

PE

You can take part in all PE lessons with a walking aid with careful planning.
Plan how your pupil can balance, jump, hop, etc.
Plan involvement in class games, rather than being the scorer.

Where do they come from?

They are always prescribed by a Health service professional.

This could be at an accident or emergency department or by a physiotherapist.

Planning usage

- If the child uses splints discuss their use with the physiotherapist.
- Teach the child to consider other people when using their walking aid. Discourage racing around school corridors! Normal school rules apply!!!
- Consider the timetable, plan when and how the equipment will be used.
- Develop a mobility plan for using the walking aid.
- Involve other pupils so that they are aware of the equipment.
- Familiarise young children with walking aids through the use of toys, posters and suitable dolls. These may be borrowed from the advisory teacher for pupils with physical disabilities. This type of interaction helps to make the equipment acceptable and unremarkable.
- Involve parent and pupil to ensure continuity between home and school.

Useful Tips

- Children using a walking aid may need extra time and space when moving around school.
- Walking frames will usually fold for travel. Learn how to do this.
- Light items may be carried using a string bag attached to a walking frame. Discuss this with your physiotherapist.
- Fingerless leather gloves may protect the hands of people using crutches.
- Ensure that a child can access their walking aid as independently as possible.
- Try not to store the aid where the child cannot reach it.
- Enable this by planning usage to and from an activity. Ensure that a child is not marooned.
- It may be useful to develop a buddy system for equipment collection.
- Consider fire escape procedures.



Safety Issues

- All walking aids must have a rubber tip called a ferrule. Check these regularly for wear and replace when necessary.
- Standard ferrules may be purchased in Boots or supplied by your local physiotherapy department. Let parents/carers know if you have any concerns.
- Remember to check the aids regularly. Tighten loose screws or arrange for worn parts to be replaced, e.g. hand grips.
- Teach the child to consider others when stowing crutches and sticks. Take care to avoid them becoming a hazard.
- Beware of loose tiles, trailing leads or uneven surfaces, e.g. PE mats, as these can cause a child to slip or trip.
- Take care on wet, shiny or slippery surfaces, e.g. wet leaves as these cause slippage.
- Check door thresholds as these can be hazardous. Consortium sell threshold protectors.

