

Transfers

Transfers or transitions are the moves we make to get from one place to another. The aim of transfer training is for each student to reach his /her maximum level of participation within transitions. For some students this will mean total independence. For others it may mean simply holding onto someone's hand as the student pulls the wheelchair along, or relaxing before being lifted from one position to another. Countless opportunities for transition training are found within routine as students move from one activity or one position to another.

If your student is making good progress with regards to taking some body weight during standing transfers, then the next step for may be to learn to hold onto a surface while doing a transfer. Wherever possible, encourage your student to use arms and hands to reach up and grasp, (e.g.. holding onto a desk/chair in the classroom or grab a rail/wash hand basin in the washroom, etc.)

Lifts/Transfers

Transfers are guiding and/or assisting the student from one surface to another. The student is able to bear some weight in the legs. Lifts are any procedure where the student's entire body weight is borne by someone or something other than the student (i.e.: a mechanical lifting device) for purposes of repositioning or moving to another surface. Repositioning is shifting, adjusting or changing the student's position in bed, wheelchair, chair, or other supportive surface.

You cannot separate position changes from lifts/transfers. It will always be important to offer a number of position changes during the day to:

- promote independence
- improve physical abilities
- help maintain flexibility
- enhance comfort
- reduce pressure on one area of the body

As most children get older, they also get taller, heavier and more difficult to lift. Alternatives should be considered for at least some of the lifts/transfers as your student gains weight. Here are some considerations to consider in consultation with your student's Physiotherapist:

1. Look carefully at the daily schedule. Write down each lift and from where to where.
2. Is there a way to have your student participate more actively in the lift by pushing into standing for a transfer?
3. Can you change how you position the equipment to make the lift easier? (e.g., put the side-lyer up on a high table.) Try to avoid lifts that go to the floor as this is the most difficult position to go down to and get up from.

4. Can you schedule any lifts for two people where someone in the school can help at assigned times?
5. Is a mechanical lift something that would be helpful to try? If so, where and when would you use it? Consider whether you want other students to see your student using it.
6. Can changes be made to your student's seating in the future that will make standing transfers easier?
7. Keep communication going in the classroom so that the assistant will know when the class is moving to a new place and how long they will be there. This will help determine if it is worthwhile to change your student's position.
A transfer can be practiced within a daily washroom routine (e.g., transferring from a wheelchair to the bed. Your student may require physical and/or verbal prompts to move through this transfer.

Types Of Transfers

Side to side Transfer

This is a transfer assisted by two people. One person supports and moves the left side of the student's body and the other person supports and moves the right side of the student's body in the direction of the transfer.

Wheelchair to Floor and Floor to Wheelchair Transfers

Wheelchair to floor and (vice versa) may be another area of transfers to explore. It is important to consult with your local Physiotherapist when exploring these transfers, as this person will be able to problem solve around difficulties which may arise when starting these transfers with your student, as well as advise you on proper body mechanics.

Two Person Top and Bottom Lift

This is a transfer assisted by two people. One person supports and move the upper part of the student's body and the other person supports and moves the lower part of the student's body in the direction of the transfer.

Remember

- Make sure the braking system of the wheelchair is functional and "on" before initiating any transfer or lift.
- For further stability, you may want to position the wheelchair against a wall before initiating the transfer.
- *Your local Physiotherapist will be able to assist you in deciding upon which method is best for your student.*