

## POSITIONING FOR SWITCH USE

When using the switch, consideration must be given to the switch placement. The helper, in consultation with the consulting therapist (OT, SLP, PT) must take into consideration the following:

- **Student's Position**
- **How will your Student access his/her switch?**
- **Type of switch**
- **Switch position**

### STUDENT'S POSITION

The way in which your Student is positioned affects his/her ability to use volitional movements.

The student may...

- be in his/her wheelchair,
- lying on his/her tummy over a wedge,
- in his/her standing frame, or
- lying on his/her side.

It is important for your Student, and both their home and school, to be able to offer them the same degree of independence using the switch regardless of their positioning.

The switch must be in easy access and reach for your student whatever position is most comfortable for him/her.

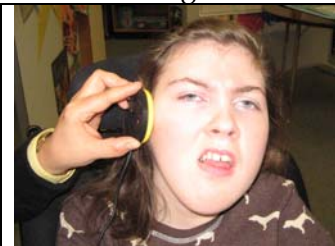
### HOW WILL YOUR STUDENT ACCESS THE SWITCH?

Once your student's positioning has been established, the team (in consultation with the therapist,) will need to decide how s/he will access the switch.

Examples...

- Use a hand by hitting the switch
- Use a hand by using a finger
- Hit the switch using the side of a hand
- If your student is unable to use a hand, will s/he may use one of the following possible sites ...
  - Elbow
  - Face
  - Leg
  - Foot
  - Or other part of their body.

The following are some examples...



Jelly bean switch with cheek access



Microlight switch with finger access.

The type of switch used, is usually dependent upon where the student accesses the switch.

Remember to take into consideration:

- Your student's dominant side
- When your student will be accessing the switch
- Whether your student needs to access the switch in a variety of positions.

### **SWITCH TYPE**

There are a variety of different switches available. The type of switch your student use will also be an important factor in determining the both your student's positioning and the position of switch (switch site)

Please refer to website reference 'Switch Type'

### **POSITION OF THE SWITCH**

The positioning and mounting of a switch will be determined by:

- The volitional movement demonstrated by your student
- How your student will be accessing the switch (where on the body)
- The type of switch that the team decides the choose
- The physical condition of your student (e.g. muscle tone, strength etc.)
- How portable the switch needs to be (e.g. do you need to be able to move the switch to another site)
- What other equipment the student is required to have (e.g. if your student is in a wheelchair, a universal mounting arm may be too cumbersome and therefore may affect where you plan to place the switch)

Switches may be mounted:

- On a wheelchair
- On a wheelchair tray
- On a stander or walker
- On a desk
- Directly strapped to your student's hand

Switches can be adjusted or adapted to meet your student's needs by:

- Angling the switch towards or away from your student
- Velcroing the switch to a particular site (for easy movement, providing your student does not hit the switch too hard)
- Adjusting the height of the switch
- Providing overlays to the switch for visual interest
- Providing different sensory input to the face of the switch (if appropriate)

### **REMEMBER...**

Wherever the student's team decides to place the switch, it is important to question whether your student's **movement**, **type of switch** and **switch position**

- is voluntary both on and off (often the latter is the more difficult),
- is repeatable,
- is easy and energy efficient, and
- reduces or eliminates minimal or accidental hits.