

Power Mobility Training Ideas for Children

Many children find it easier to initially learn to drive a power wheelchair by:

- being given the freedom to explore & play with fun motivating activities
- beginning with one familiar assistant
- beginning on slow speed, in large open spaces that are free of obstacles (i.e. driving up to a table)
- allowing the child to direct the play activity & where to drive. Only provide minimal verbal instructions.
- being given verbal feedback on what they are doing (i.e. "you are driving in circles")
- being given functional verbal directions as many children don't understand the words right, left, forward, reverse (i.e. "let's play over here" or "turn this way" or "go")
- being given frequent positive feedback
- being provided with the appropriate level of supervision in a safe environmental setting
- Keeping the sessions a reasonable length for the child's energy level. Shorter, more frequent sessions are usually best.



Activity Ideas:

- **Go Go Go Stop:** Leader turns away from children on the opposite side of the room. The leader gives the commands "go go go" or "stop" randomly. The children drive towards the leader and whomever reaches the leader or crosses a line on the ground first gets to be the leader.

- **Musical Statues:** Leader plays music while the children move around. When the music stops the children have to stop. Whomever doesn't stop is out of the game and the last person remaining gets to be the leader. A variation can be the moving monster who will eat anyone that isn't stopped.
- **Popcorn:** Leader places a sheet of bubble wrap on the ground (coloured paper may be needed underneath for greater visibility, and it should be taped to the floor/ground). Children can drive over it to hear the loud popcorn noises until all the popcorn is made and they don't hear any more "pops."
- **Flashlight Discovery:** Tape a flashlight to the wheelchair and dim the lights. Have the children enjoy driving around shining their light on items in the large room.
- **Squish the Juicebox:** Place an empty juice box on the ground and children drive over it to see who has the flattest one. Full juice boxes can be fun to squish outside.
- **Tortoise and the Hare:** Children line up on one end of the room/field and when you say "tortoise" they have to drive as slowly as possible and when you say "hare" they have to drive as quickly as possible.
- **Shark Attack:** Children line up on one side of the room/field. Yell "shark attack" and count to 10 before catching the kids who have driven to the other side.

- **Steamroller:** Children can push a large therapy roll from one area to another to pretend they are a steamroller, bobcat tractor, snowplow, paddlewheel boat etc. Ensure the roll won't get trapped under wheelchair wheels or under the footrests.
- **Timber!:** Children drive to a large therapy roll positioned vertically to knock it over, yell "timber" to pretend it's a tree or other object they knocked over. Ensure they stop immediately afterward to prevent it getting trapped under the wheelchair. *Avoid this activity if the child can't differentiate between a play task and knocking real objects over.*
- **You Scored!:** Children push a large therapy ball or other large ball that won't get caught under the wheelchair wheels or footrests into a goal area to score. Option would be to drive towards goal and give child a ball to throw or push into a goal.
- **Bowling:** Children can push the large therapy roll on its side or a large ball to knock over bowling pins (plastic bottles)
- **Car Wash:** Tape together huge sections of cardboard to create a large tunnel the children can drive through. Hang strips of crepe paper to the far end for them to drive through the ribbons. Sound effects are fun.
- **Hide & Seek:** Children drive to various areas in a room or in various rooms to locate other kids who are hidden.
- **Treasure Hunt:** Children can pretend they are pirates and hunt for hidden treasure around the room or in several rooms. Scavenger hunts are a fun option where children locate items on a list or that relate to a current learning theme.

- **Obstacle Courses:** Children drive through obstacle courses of varying difficulty. Design with common objects such as street chalk, skipping ropes, hose, chairs, cardboard tunnels, homemade street signs, mats, large pylons etc.
- **Leap Frog:** Children drive the wheelchairs from lily pad to lily pad to stay out of the water. Paper lilypads are taped to the floor. Substitute for colours, numbers, letters, pictures of animals, the child's name etc.
- **Grocery Shopping:** Children drive beside taped paper groceries or near toy or real grocery items and collect them in on their lap, in a basket, or backpack with help if needed. Any number of items can be collected (i.e. stickers) or delivered such as letters (i.e. pretending to be a postman).
- **Build a Face:** Children drive the wheelchairs onto taped paper facial features on the floor. The leader then picks it up and places it on the wall to build a funny face. Any number of items could be built such as a house, an animal, etc.
- **Clothesline:** Children drive to a clothesline that has various items hanging from it and either grabs the item that is requested or stops underneath that item.
- **Rubber Snake:** Children drive over a rubber snake, chalkline or skipping rope that is thrown in a particular location. Alternatively, the children need to drive on a pathway to avoid driving on the snakes.
- **Dress Up:** Children drive around the room to locate items they'd like to wear for a costume.