

## Special Equipment and Mobility Aids

Assistive devices or equipment can assist your child in reaching developmental milestones that are appropriate to his or her specific age. The following lists some of the types of assistive devices that are available for children with spina bifida.

### Bucket Seat

This specially molded plastic seat provides your child with support to allow him/her to sit, play and develop hand skills. The bucket seat can be used in the high chair, stroller, caster cart or on the floor. It is important to have adequate trunk support so both hands are free for play and one hand is not required for support. This seat provides more support than the corner seat and table.

### Corner Seat and Table

The corner seat and table provide support for sitting. It allows your child to sit without using his/her hands for balance, enabling play and development of hand skills. The corner seat and table offer less support than a bucket seat.

### Caster Cart

A caster cart is a three-wheeled cart that allows your child to move around inside the house or outdoors without harming his skin. This prevents skin breakdown on the legs caused by dragging the legs over rough surfaces. The bucket seat can be used in the caster cart if more trunk support is required.

### Nursery Table and Chair

This large wooden table has a cutout on one side and a chair that is custom made for the exact size of your child. They can be used once your child has outgrown the corner seat and table or bucket seat to continue the development of hand skills while support is provided for the trunk.

### Wheelchair

Around two to three years of age, children will typically want to be able to get around on their own to feel more grown up. A wheelchair will provide independence and can be used part of the day for outings or can be used all day. Your child will not be as tired when using a wheelchair compared with using braces and crutches.

### Bath Seats

Infant bath seats are helpful for bathing your infant safely. The bucket seat can also be used as a bath seat for infants and young children. For privacy, special bath or shower chairs can be ordered for older children and adults to provide support for bathing and showering. They can be purchased through a medical supply company. Your physiotherapist or occupational therapist can suggest the most appropriate seat for your child.

### Body Jackets

If your child has scoliosis, they may be prescribed a body jacket to help maintain a straight back by providing support for the trunk. They are worn under the clothing and are used all day while in a wheelchair, parapodium or other equipment.

### Walker/Roller/Crutches/Canes

Some children may need walkers, rollators, crutches and canes to help them walk. These children may have weak leg muscles or tight joints. Walkers and canes provide extra support for stability and balance.

### Transfer Board

This simple board can be used to make transferring easier from a wheelchair to bed, for example.

## Braces/Splints

A brace, called an orthosis, can help your child to stand, move or walk. There are a variety of orthoses available, but each child needs to be assessed for the one most appropriate for him or her. When any of the braces become too tight and/or leave marks on the skin, your orthotist needs to check the fit of the braces.

Some common types of braces are:

### *Knee Ankle Foot Orthosis (KAFO)*

KAFOs support the knee and ankle and allow your child to stand and walk with or without crutches or a walker. Socks must be worn under the braces to protect the skin. Regular clothing can be worn over the braces.

### *Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO)*

AFOs are splints which hold the feet straight for standing and walking with and without walkers or crutches. To prevent developing any red or darkened areas on the skin, AFOs should be worn over wrinkle-free socks that have been turned inside out.

### *Standing brace*

A standing brace supports your child's body and legs in a standing position and allows walking when using a walker or rollator. Some children learn to "swivel", or move forward by using a side-to-side motion without the use of a walker or rollator. AFOs may or may not be used while in the standing brace.

### *RGO (Reciprocating Gait Orthosis)*

An RGO may be used when the standing brace is outgrown. The RGO allows your child to take steps by placing one foot in front of the other. A walker or crutches must always be used to maintain balance.

## Hydrocephalus Canada

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Canadians living with hydrocephalus and spina bifida.

Every day we strive to empower those impacted by both conditions to experience the best life possible.

We do this by establishing environments that protect, support and enhance the lives of those living with, or at risk of developing, these conditions.

Our work focuses on four areas of influence – Education, Support, Awareness and Research.

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