

# Orientation and Mobility: Preschool Style



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Orientation and Mobility is broadly defined as the ability to move safely and efficiently through any environment. At the adult level, this translates into the ability to independently cross streets, to use public transit systems, to go to work, to go shopping, etc. At the preschool level, students need to develop the concepts and skills which make the above mentioned goals attainable later in life.

Several areas of skill development should be included in a preschool O&M program. All individuals should incorporate these skills into the child's daily routine. This allows everyone to be actively involved in the child's growth and development. Parents, caregivers, teachers, related service personnel, as well as Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists will be working on the same, common goal. The ultimate goal of the program is to develop a child into a skilled, age-appropriate traveler who understands basic concepts and can begin to apply learned skills to perform more complex tasks.

Below is a list of skill areas considered to be best practice. These areas should be incorporated into an early childhood O&M program.

- Improve use of visual skills
- Improve use of auditory skills
- Improve use of tactile skills
- Begin learning spatial concepts
- Begin learning environmental concepts
- Improve use of gross motor skills
- Improve use of fine motor skills
- Beginning use of clues and landmarks
- Sighted guide techniques
- Beginning cane techniques
- Limited travel in residential areas

Only a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist should teach the last four items on the above list. Anyone who works with a child with visual impairment is encouraged to incorporate the rest of the skill areas into the child's routine. The following pages are a few games that encourage development of visual, auditory or tactile skills and/or introduce spatial, body, or environmental concepts. Please feel free to use these games as they are, or as a springboard for inventing games of your own. More games will be added as they are invented.

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