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# "Belonging, Being and Becoming" Implementing Orientation & Mobility within the Early Years Learning Framework

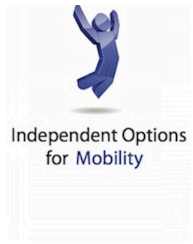Dr. Bronwen Scott

Independent Options for Mobility

Independent Options
for Mobility
*Training and Education for Independent Travel*

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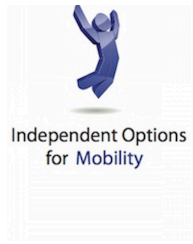2017 CONFERENCE
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# O&M and Early Childhood

- The foundation for O&M skills are built during infancy and early childhood.

- O&M concepts and skills are developed in the child's home environment and community.

- Parents are a child's first and most important teacher.

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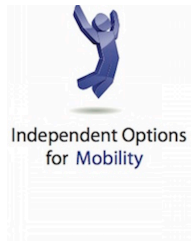
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# O&M and Early Childhood

- O&M programs for young children include:
  - Motor development, including **purposeful** and **self-initiated** movement.
  - Sensory skill development.
  - Concept development.
  - Environmental and community awareness.

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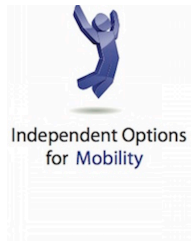Independent Options
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# O&M and Early Childhood

- O&M intervention occurs within the context of:

  - Family-centred practice.
  - Natural learning opportunities.
  - Transdisciplinary teams.

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# The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

- Provides a nationally consistent approach to early childhood education for children aged birth to five years, and extending into the transition to school.



BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING

The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

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# Belonging



- The importance of relationships in defining a child's identity.
- Family, culture, neighbourhood, community.

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# Being

- How children engage with daily life, develop relationships, and meet challenges.
- The significance of the 'here and now'.

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# Becoming



- Recognises the rapid and significant changes that occur during the early years.
- The development of our future adult selves.

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# EYLF Learning Outcomes

- **Children have a strong sense of identity.**
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
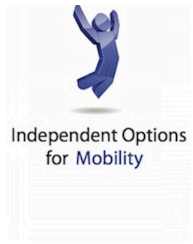- Children are effective communicators.

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# Developing a Sense of Identity

- Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities.
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

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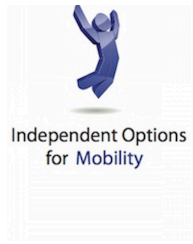# O&M and Identity

- Children who are blind or have low vision need to develop an identity that includes using a mobility device or a range of O&M strategies from a young age.

- Develops their sense of autonomy over their own independent travel (Scott, 2015).

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# O&M and Identity

- "The goal of O&M is the independent movement and travel in blind children at an age/stage appropriate time so that **children develop the perception of themselves as active movers and independent travellers**"

- (Cutter, 2007, p. 2)

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# O&M and Identity

- Very young children can learn to use a range of modified O&M techniques, including long cane mobility (Anthony et al., 2002; Cutter, 2007; Scott, 2015).



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# O&M and Identity

- Children's experience are shaped by "the guidance, care and teaching by families and educators" (EYLF, 2009, p. 20).

- O&M techniques and strategies need to be implemented throughout daily routines by family and educators.

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# Practical Teaching Strategies

- EYLF Sub Outcome: Children feel safe, secure and supported.

- Under 2 years of age:  Encourage early concept development through appropriate play – for example, reaching to a noise-making toy.

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# Practical Teaching Strategies

- EYLF Sub Outcome: Children feel safe, secure and supported.

- Over 2 years of age:  Expand O&M skills, techniques and language into more complex predictable daily routines.

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# Practical Teaching Strategies



- EYLF Sub Outcome: Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.

- Under 2 years of age:  Provide different strategies for **active movement** – being guided, trailing, using a mobility aid.

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# Practical Teaching Strategies



- EYLF Sub Outcome: Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.

- Over 2 years of age:  Once children are moving independently, allow them to make discoveries for themselves and ask questions. Get excited about their discoveries!

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# Practical Teaching Strategies

- EYLF Sub Outcome: Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities.

- Under 2 years of age:  Use songs and rhymes that refer to blindness, O&M, or long canes.



When you walk with your cane,
in the sunshine and the rain,
it will help you to walk straight,
and keep you safe.

Hold your cane out in front,
to make sure you don't get bumped,
take it with you everywhere,
you'll be good friends.

# Practical Teaching Strategies

- EYLF Sub Outcome: Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities.

- Over 2 years of age: Encourage children to understand and talk about their eye condition to others.

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# Practical Teaching Strategies



- EYLF Sub Outcome: Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

- Under 2 years of age: Ensure one-to-one interactions with the child are initiated thoughtfully – verbal pre-warning before touching, hand-under-hand techniques.

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# Practical Teaching Strategies



- EYLF Sub Outcome: Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

- Over 2 years of age:  Assist others to support the child to join in play and social experiences.

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# Practical Teaching Strategies

- Using a 'teaching cane'.

- Coloured canes.

- 'Naming' the cane.



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# Further Information

- JSPEVI article
- http://www.options4mobility.com.au/earlyintervention/
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