



Helping Students with Mobility/Physical Disabilities



Definitions

Students with mobility and/or physical disabilities usually have difficulty getting from one place to another. Using a pen, pencil, or keyboard may also be troublesome. Individuals with mobility/physical disabilities generally have normal intellectual functioning. This wide classification includes disabilities present at birth (clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), disabilities caused by disease (bone tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, etc.), and disabilities from other causes (amputation, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, etc.). Most conditions are permanent and tend to be relatively stable over time. However, some conditions worsen over time (muscular dystrophy, for example).

Learning

To learn effectively, students must be able to:

- 1) Receive information accurately
- 2) Organize information by selecting what is important
- 3) Understand information by relating it to past experience and knowledge
- 4) Demonstrate and apply the acquired knowledge

Modifying teaching strategies and using assistive technology devices and services can compensate for difficulties in learning performance.



Potential Difficulties for Students with Mobility/Physical Impairments



- Receiving information through usual presentation methods
- Asking for clarification or additional information
- Arriving in class on time
- Completing “outside” assignments (labs, field trips, etc.)
- Taking notes
- Completing written assignments



Possible Teacher Modifications

- Provide class materials in an accessible format such as large print or tape recordings
- Allow sufficient time to complete written assignments
- Design assignments to accentuate student's strengths
- Use teaching assistants, lab partners, or others to provide physical assistance
- Use correct student computer positioning
- Adjust keyboard control system
- Modify course
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Environmental adaptations



Possible Modifications by the Learner

- Tape lectures rather than take notes
- Translate print into an alternative format (large print, Braille, etc.)
- Demonstrate knowledge through other means (oral vs. written, etc.)
- Allowing extra time to get to class

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology devices are pieces of equipment or product systems that are used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of students with disabilities. Children and adults can accomplish things with assistive technology that otherwise would be difficult or impossible. Assistive devices and services improve a student's ability to learn, study, compete, work, communicate, and interact with family and friends.

Federal rules and regulations require each public agency/school district to provide assistive technology devices and services for students with disabilities if required as part of their special education program. Assistive technology must be considered as an option for every IEP. Assistive technology may be included in the IEP annual goals and short term objectives, supplementary aids and services, or related services. For more information, call the Utah Assistive Technology Program, Utah Parent Center, or the Disability Law Center and ask for a copy of the Family Guide to Assistive Technology. Some of the assistive technology devices that can help students with mobility/physical disabilities include:

- Word prediction programs
- Computer keyguards
- Voice recognition systems
- Switches to operate a computer
- Mouth sticks or mouth-operated joysticks
- Walkers
- Power wheelchairs
- Tape players
- Page turners
- Alternative keyboards



- Touch windows
- Trackballs to perform mouse functions
- Seating and positioning
- Three wheel scooter
- Environmental adaptations
- Alternative and augmentative communication devices

For more information, contact:

Utah Center for Assistive Technology
1595 West 500 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104
888/866-5550
E-mail: tjackson@usor.state.ut.us
Web: www.usor.state.ut.us/ucats/hs~index.htm

Access Utah Network
155 South 300 West #100
Salt Lake City, Utah 84102
801/533-4636 (V/TTY)
E-mail: accessut@state.ut.us
Web: www.accessut.state.ut.us

Active ReEntry Independent Living Center
451 South Carbon Avenue
Price, Utah 84501
801/637-4950 (V/TTY)
E-mail: active@arecil.org
Web: www.arecil.org

Options for Independence
1095 North Main
Logan, Utah 84321
435/753-5353 (V/TTY)
E-mail: jbiggs@optionsind.org
Web: www.optionsind.org

Red Rock Center for Independence
515 West 300 North, Suite A
St. George, UT 84770
801/673-7501 (V/TTY)
E-mail: rrci@rrci.org
Web: www.rrci.org

Utah Independent Living Center
3445 South Main St.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115
801/466-5565 Voice 801/466-9910 TTY
E-mail: uilc@xmission.com
Web: www.xmission.com/~uilc

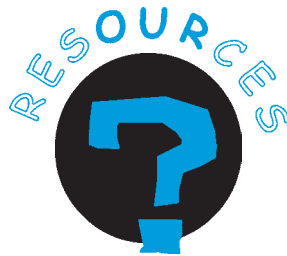
United Cerebral Palsy of UT
3550 South 700 West
South Salt Lake, Utah 84119
801/266-8031 888/UCP-UTAH
E-mail: contact@ucputah.org
Web: www.ucputah.org

Utah Parent Center
2290 East 4500 South, Suite 110
Salt Lake City, Utah 84117
800/468-1160 (V/TTY)
E-mail: katie@utahparentcenter.org
Web: www.utahparentcenter.org

Easter Seals of Utah
638 E. Wilmington Avenue
Salt Lake City, UT 84106
801/486-3778 (V/TTY); 800/388-1991
E-mail: rstarley@eastersealsutah.org
Web: www.ut.easter-seals.org

Muscular Dystrophy Association
4578 South Highland Drive #300
Salt Lake City, UT 84117
801/278-6200
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Also available in Braille, large print, audiotape, and disk formats.

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