

A Routines-Based Approach to Orientation and Mobility (O&M) in Schools

What is Routines-Based Intervention?

- O&M skills and techniques are embedded within naturally occurring activities throughout the student's day – both at home and within the educational setting.
- This provides meaningful and repeated learning experiences for the student.
- Students learn and practice their skills in the places they will use them.
- The focus of routines-based intervention is to support those who interact with the child on a regular basis, as the majority of the student's learning will occur *between* O&M visits.

How does it work?

- The O&M Specialist, the student's family, and the student (where appropriate) develop individual functional O&M goals to be worked on during the year.
- The O&M Specialist and the classroom teacher meet to discuss the student's goals and how they might be implemented during the student's daily routines at school. Ideally, this should take place during the student's IEP meetings.
- The O&M Specialist and the classroom teacher develop a planning matrix (see attached example) to embed a small number of O&M goals within the regular classroom routine.
- The goals are reviewed and updated on a regular basis – for example, via regular email contact and a monthly visit from the O&M Specialist.

Does this mean the O&M Specialist doesn't provide any 'hands-on' training directly to the student?

- No. There are times when individual O&M skills-based specialist intervention is required – the introduction of new long cane skills, for example. To ensure maximal learning of these new skills occur, the O&M specialist will then support education staff to embed these skills within the daily planning matrix.

Does this mean extra work for the school staff?

- No. The O&M Specialist models teaching strategies and supports staff so that O&M goals are embedded into the activities teachers would normally be doing with that student. In most cases, this will require only a slight adaptation to how the child would normally participate in this activity. For example, a student would independently locate their desk in the classroom upon arrival using their O&M skills, rather than expecting an adult to guide them to it.

Sample Template

Embedding Strategies in Student's Day

Embedding O&M Objectives into Daily Routine

Student: _____

O&M goals: XX is working towards achieving the following O&M goals this year.

XX will:

- Demonstrate the ability to travel independently within her classroom.
- Increase her cane skills in order to travel safely and independently in the school environment.
- Demonstrate an improvement in recognising and using landmarks and clues for orientation purposes.

| O&M Goal | Arrival | Session 1 (e.g. Reading) | Morning Recess | Session 2 (e.g. library) | Lunch | Session 3 (e.g. Maths) | Departure |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---------------------------|---|
| Independent travel within the classroom | | XX will use trailing and body protection skills to move independently from her desk to the group area | | | | | Xx will independently travel from their desk to collect their school bag. |
| Increase her cane skills | | | XX will independently walk with her long cane from her classroom to the outside play area. | XX will practice ascending the stairs independently with her long cane as she travels to the library. | | | |
| Use landmarks and clues for orientation purposes | XX will identify a landmark that indicates his classroom. | | | | XX will identify a landmark that indicates the lunch area. | | |

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