



Making the difference

Positioning Children in Supportive Equipment POLICY AND GUIDELINES



POSITIONING CHILDREN IN SUPPORTIVE EQUIPMENT POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Children are positioned in supportive equipment in sitting, standing or lying to enable them to improve their function, prevent the development of deformities and to keep them safe from harm.

Children are not to be held into equipment with straps if these straps are not essential to the improvement of their function, the prevention of deformity or to keeping them safe from harm.

Equipment or furniture should never be used to restrain a child.

Straps will commonly be used in the following situations;

In static and mobile chairs to

- Position the child's pelvis back in the chair and to prevent them sliding forwards. This provides a stable base, keeping the child's hips at the optimum 90 degrees and giving the best position for upper limb function.
- Provide support and security at chest level for children who would otherwise fall forwards. This may take the form of shoulder straps or a chest harness.
- Give stability to the feet on the footrests by anchoring them in place and contributing to the optimum position of 90 degrees at hips, knees and feet. This is the most stable and secure position from which to function.
- Trays on chairs may sometimes provide further support for the trunk by allowing the child to lean with their forearms.
- Head supports with a forehead strap will occasionally be used on prescription only. The assessment for this will take place with therapist and parents/carers in attendance.

In standing frames and walking frames to

- Support the body in an upright position.
- Keep the hips forward and prevent flexion and collapse.
- Make sure the upper trunk is not able to extend uncomfortably.
- Encourage the feet to stay in place on the footrests or in alignment with the rest of the body.
- Leg gaiters may sometimes give more support to the child's legs and enable more upright standing.

In lying supports to

- Maintain the pelvis in a symmetrical position.
- Maintain the legs in a symmetrical position.

In all cases straps should be firmly but not tightly positioned and should never be uncomfortable. Wherever possible the original straps, manufactured with the equipment, should be used. On those occasions where this is not appropriate straps can be made up and should consist of webbing and Velcro.

Any deviation from the programme of positioning of a child will be discussed with parents / carers and must be recorded in the child's records.

Kate Moss, Head of Therapy