Wheelchairs and extra postural support can help children to:

- Move around
- Eat by themselves
- Communicate
- Go to school
- Play with their friends

Early referral for wheelchairs and extra postural support is important.

- By the age of one – many children are able to sit by themselves; and are pulling themselves up to stand
- By the age of two – many children are able to walk on their own

Children who are having difficulty doing these things may need a wheelchair and extra postural support. Refer for a wheelchair assessment.
Children who use a wheelchair and have limited ability to change their position or posture – need support in different positions during the day and night.

**SITTING**

Some different ways to support children sitting closer to the floor are:

1. Sitting astride a log, roller or tightly rolled blanket.
2. Sitting with support from a family member/carer.
3. Sitting in a supportive seat which is low to the ground.

**STANDING**

Standing helps to form the hip joints and the normal curves of the trunk/spine. Standing also stretches out the muscles around the hip, knee and ankle joints and helps to prevent these joints from becoming stiff.

When a child cannot stand independently, a standing frame can help.

**LYING**

Provide support for children when lying to help them to play and sleep comfortably.

Blankets, foam, towels or pillows can be used to give support.
Discuss with the wheelchair user: what do they know, and what would they like to learn? Use the checklist to remember key things to teach the wheelchair user.

### WHEELCHAIR HANDLING

- Folding and lifting the wheelchair
- Taking off and putting back on any PSDs that need to come off for transport
- Using quick-release wheels
- Using the brakes
- Tilting and anti-tip bars (if used)
- Correct position of PSDs when the wheelchair user is in the wheelchair
- Using the cushion including positioning correctly

### TRANSFERS

- Independent transfer or
- Assisted transfer
- Teach the most appropriate transfer method for the wheelchair user.

### WHEELCHAIR USE AND MOBILITY

- Pushing correctly using the wheelchair user’s preferred method
- Up and down a slope
- Up and down a step
- On rough ground
- Partial wheelie
- How long to sit in the wheelchair (for children and adults with intermediate postural needs)
- Assisted pushing

### PREVENTING PRESSURE SORES

- Check areas of high pressure for pressure sores
- Pressure relief lifts
- Eat well and drink lots of water
- What to do if a pressure sore develops

### HOW TO CARE FOR A WHEELCHAIR AT HOME

- Clean the wheelchair; wash and dry the cushion and cushion cover
- Oil moving parts
- Pump the tyres
- Tighten nuts and bolts
- Tighten spokes
- Check upholstery
- Check for rust
- Check the cushion

### WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS A PROBLEM

- Wheelchair needs repairs
- Wheelchair does not fit or is not comfortable