

READINESS CRITERIA

PRECANE (ALTERNATIVE MOBILITY DEVICE)

POSTURAL STABILITY – The child has the ability to walk independently with good stability and balance; the hands are seldom held in “high guard” any longer, for balance.

SPATIAL SECURITY – The child shows some confidence and spatial awareness when walking in a familiar, open space for short distances, without physical support or guiding.

MEANINGFUL GOALS – The setting offers meaningful, familiar goals in the course of the child’s routine. The routes to these goals can be broken down into short, (e.g., 6 to 20 ft.) distances between clear landmarks.

DECREASED VISION – The child shows a need for protection due to significantly decreased vision that causes unreliable obstacle or drop-off detection.

GRASP – The child shows the ability and motivation to maintain grasp of the handle of a push toy or precane for a significant distance.

INTEREST – The child shows interest in pushing a toy push cart or precane.

AWARENESS – The child shows obvious awareness of the protective nature of a push cart or precane, as seen by increased speed and distance covered when using such device, vs. walking without one.

TACTILE/SPATIAL EXPERIENCE – The child has had adequate previous experience with trailing, landmark identification, room and building exploration, and simple landmark sequences along trailing routes.

GOAL DIRECTEDNESS – The child routinely thinks of desired objects or landmarks and moves purposefully to find them, vs. moving for movement’s sake or for random exploration.

LONG CANE

(SAME AS ALL CRITERIA UNDER PRECANE, WHEN USING THE LONG CANE, plus ...)

SURFACE/OBSTACLE AWARENESS – The child shows a clear interest in and awareness of surfaces and obstacles contacted with a push cart, precane, or long cane, i.e., the child responds in some way to contact with distinctive surfaces or obstacles indicating curiosity or recognition.

TIP POSITION – The child shows the ability to keep the cane tip on the floor surface consistently, vs. haphazard or unsafe placement, and walks 8 to 10 feet with the tip in front.

COMPLEX SETTING – The primary educational setting (or other commonly used setting) offers significant challenges such as size, lack of familiarity, and spatial complexity. A familiar home or classroom do not often present these challenges.

TEAM COMMITMENT – Teachers and/or caregivers can be identified who are available for daily practice, committed to the introduction of the long cane, and able to closely follow ongoing recommendations from the child’s orientation and mobility specialist (COMS) and teacher of the visually impaired (CTVI.)

AVAILABILITY OF A COMS – The child is currently receiving regular services from an orientation and mobility specialist, who is able to work collaboratively with the other team members offering O&M follow through. The COMS, with input from the team, should recommend and prescribe an individually designed long cane for the child.