



## ON Time Mobility: Advocating for Mobility Equity

*Summarized by Tamra Yandow | Fall 2023*

Andrina Sabet, PT, ATP; Heather Feldner, PT, MPT, PhD, PCS; Jennifer Tucker, PT, DPT, PCS; Samuel W. Logan, PhD; James Cole Galloway, PhD, PT, FAPTA (2022). **ON Time Mobility: Advocating for Mobility Equity**. *Pediatric Physical Therapy* 2022; 34: 546-550. DOI: 10.1097/PEP.0000000000000939.

### ON Time Mobility Framework

#### Background:

In this article, the authors propose the ON Time Mobility framework: *that all children have the right to be mobile throughout their development to explore, engage in relationships, and develop agency to cocreate their lives*. This framework is meant to guide clinicians in supporting the rights of all children in meaningful engagement in their world through active mobility.

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) defines mobility as movement between locations. While this is an accurate definition, it is not comprehensive in its' scope of the importance of mobility, especially in young children. Mobility allows young children to actively explore their world, both physical and social. Young children use that exploration as a stimulus for learning, development and socialization, and for developing relationships and autonomy. When options for movement are limited, their movement is passive (done for them by a caregiver) and their ability to explore, and therefore learn, is inhibited.

Mobility is a human right, as stated in two United Nations (UN) documents. These provide important support for therapists to challenge current funding, attitudinal and societal barriers to mobility.

The ON Time Mobility Framework uses 5 principles in its' mobility rights perspective.

- 1. Timing:** Typical developmental mobility emerges early in the first year of life. Mobility interventions should therefore be implemented in alignment with the course of typical development.
- 2. Urgency:** Mobility impacts growth in multiple developmental domains. Children who are limited in their ability to move are missing out on crucial developmental opportunities.
- 3. Multimodal:** A multimodal approach, using multiple technologies (adaptive ride-on toys, powered and manual mobility), in conjunction with gross motor skill training, addresses both the timing and urgency matters.

4. **Frequency in Real-World Environments:** Self-directed, variable movement within natural settings occurs at an extremely high frequency (ex: toddlers accumulate 14,000 steps in just 6 hours!) in children with typical development. This principle challenges therapists to pursue greater mobility opportunities throughout each day.
5. **Sociability:** Social communication and mobility are directly interconnected. Mobility interventions, including technology use, should be used in multiple, complex and diverse settings in order to create opportunities for social development.

## Conclusions and Implications for Practice

The ON Time Mobility Framework challenges us to consider the movement disparities in young children with disabilities, considering our current practice, culture, social perceptions and policies. Giving children the opportunities for independent movement on par with the developmental timeline of typically developing peers will provide them with greater opportunities for learning in many areas of development.

The authors suggest the following areas where actions can be taken to further the ON Time Mobility Framework perspective: professional education and training, clinical practice, research and development, advocacy and policy.

## Real-World Implications

- Consider mobility interventions when children are as young as 6 months of age, in alignment with the beginning of typical mobility.
- Mobility interventions should be used in conjunction with gross
- Teach families how to use these interventions within their own routines at home and in the community.
- Encourage high frequency use of mobility throughout a child's day.
- Advocate for the idea of ON Time Mobility – to your peers, your professional organization, the families you work with, and even your legislators.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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