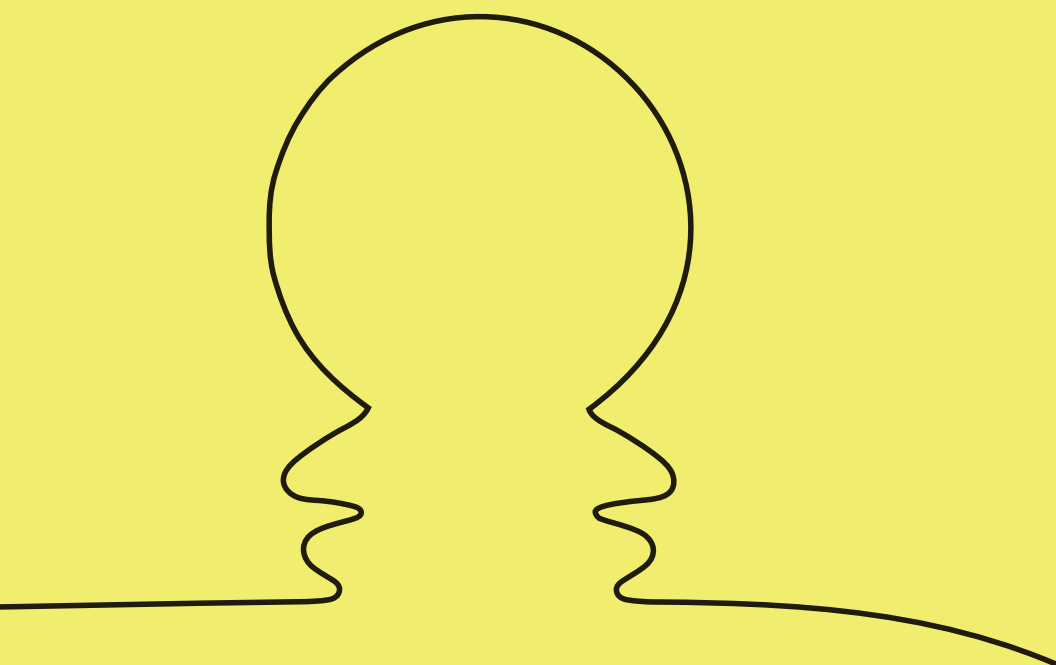








A PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE

# Explorer Mini





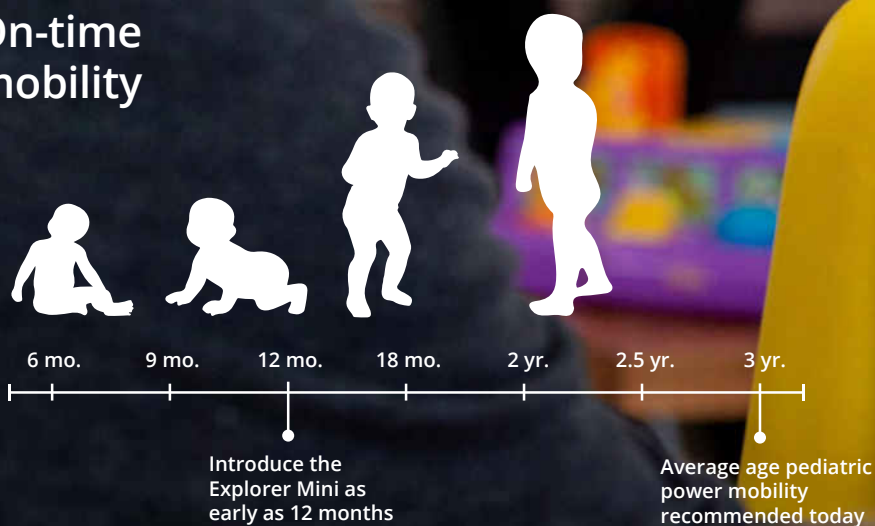
## Table of Contents

	What is the Explorer Mini?	5 – 8
	How does the Explorer Mini work?	11 – 18
	Who can use the Explorer Mini?	21 – 24
	How do you get an Explorer Mini?	27 – 32
	It's here! How should we use it?	35 – 42
	For your little explorer	45 – 51

“ Now that Sylvia has been in the Explorer Mini for a couple of weeks, we're really seeing a lot of drive for her own independence. She just wants to do stuff on her own now.

- Mike Kennedy, Sylvia's Dad

## On-time mobility







# What is the Explorer Mini?

A solution for on-time mobility





## On-time mobility – maximize early learning



Typically, by six months of age, babies have been rolling on their own and are sitting unsupported. Soon after, they are crawling, cruising, and then walking by early in their first year.



Children who are unable to move independently do not have the same opportunity to explore their environments.



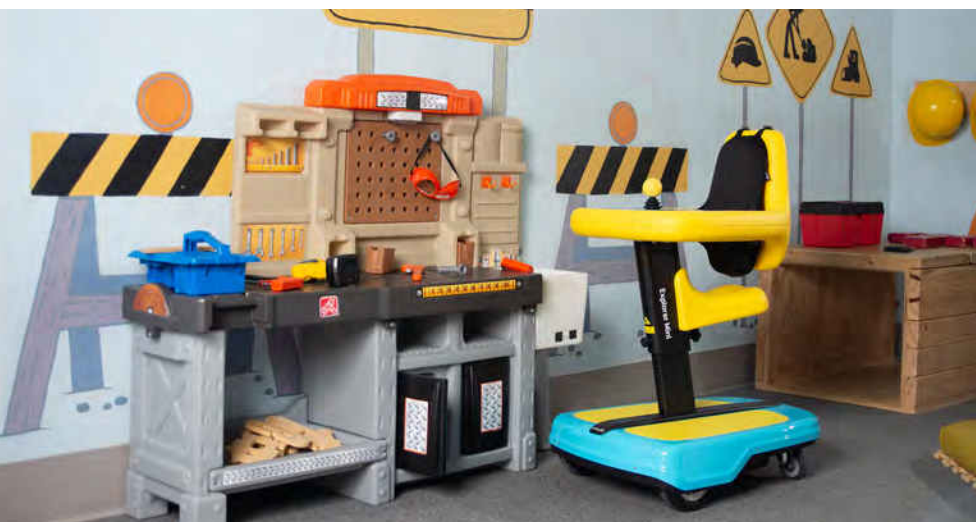
Self-initiated movement is critical for a child. Voluntary and intentional movement allows the mind and body to learn from new experiences.



Power mobility devices create opportunity for self-initiated movement, but are not usually introduced until about three years of age.



## On-time mobility – maximize early learning



Permobil identified that current power mobility devices did not truly match the need for children ages 12-36 months to encourage self-initiated movement, weight bearing and postural development.

Power mobility devices, like the Explorer Mini, will provide an opportunity to help develop independence in exploration. This can lead to a positive impact on overall and psychological development. (Livingstone & Field, 2015)

“ The young girl drove backwards across the room until she was side-by-side with the OT. The young girl reached up, grasped around the therapist’s neck, drew her head toward herself, and kissed the therapist on the cheek.

(Plummer, Logan & Morress, 2020)

Permobil collaborated with leading experts and researchers to develop and test the Explorer Mini. The researchers found that toddlers who used the Explorer Mini:

- Experienced positive responses in behavior and socialization including increased emotional responses during therapy (e.g. hugs/kisses) and physical emotions from non-verbal children (e.g. big smiles)
- Would initiate intentional movements including getting unstuck from a corner and using a joystick without caregiver help
- Demonstrated increased responsiveness during use and increased cognitive skills after use (Plummer, Logan, & Morress 2020)



### Did you know?

Early intervention programs, available in every state in the United States, were created and are funded to ensure children under the age of 3 have dedicated developmental services and supports!





## How does it work?

Designed for inclusion and development





## Designed to develop with your child

### Maximize early learning



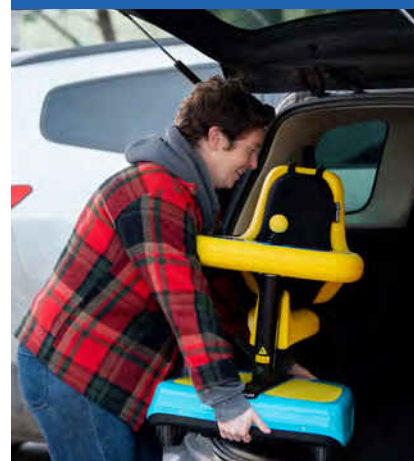
Explorer Mini is designed to maximize early learning and help aid in the achievement of key developmental milestones by introducing self-initiated movement for children with mobility impairments.

### Independence through exploration



The Explorer Mini allows your toddler to actively choose how they explore their environment and interact with others, instead of passive observation (e.g. riding in a stroller).

### Exploration made easy



A design that is lightweight, simple to transport, and has a playful look that allows your toddler to explore a variety of settings with ease.

### Developmentally inspired seating



Every detail of the Explorer Mini was designed with a specific developmental purpose to promote safe, stable, and upright postures.





## Designed to maximize early learning

Explorer Mini is designed to maximize early learning and help aid in the achievement of key developmental milestones by introducing self-initiated movement for children with mobility impairments.



### Did you know?

Crossing the midline is vital to the development of a child using both sides of their body together (e.g. think socks and shoes). But before a child crosses midline, they have to get their hands to midline!



Your child will have the most control over their movement with a joystick.



Joystick positioning promotes bringing the hands together, also known as hands to midline.



A bright, appealing joystick that attracts the attention of most toddlers, even those with visual impairments.

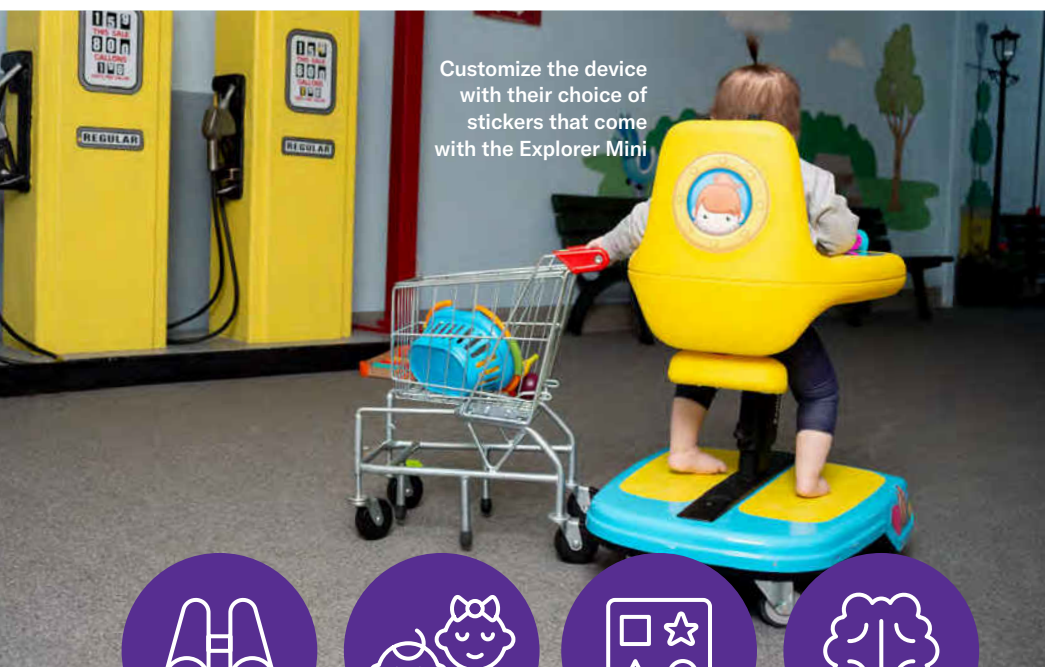


The rounded, yellow joystick is ideal to promote the development of your child's grasp, and helps teach cause & effect.



## Designed for independence through exploration

The Explorer Mini provides toddlers the opportunity to explore their surroundings in an upright and engaged position.



Freedom to explore



Increased socialization



Age-appropriate play



Develop visual & attention skills

## Designed to make exploration easy

Permobil made the Explorer Mini easy to transport and with a playful look to allow children to more easily explore a variety of settings.



Lightweight enough so that 1-2 people can easily transport it in a van or SUV



Soft, rubber surface with built-in hand hold locations, and easy to wipe clean



No tools required to adjust the height as your child grows



Everything comes in one box, fully assembled!



## Designed with developmentally inspired seating

Explorer Mini inspires and promotes safe, stable, and upright postures enabling typical, everyday movements.



A uniquely designed saddle seat puts the pelvis in an active position.

Adjustable seating that's similar to a highchair and meets your child's needs. The saddle seat is even removable to allow your child to sit or stand in the Explorer Mini.

Adjustable table height provides a place for weight bearing through the arms and trunk to help improve strength, endurance, and postural control.

How does it work?



### Did you know?

The Explorer Mini is intentionally designed without a headrest to increase the opportunity for your child to hold their own head up and move it with minimal limitations.





## Who can use the Explorer Mini?

Any child with limited mobility







# Who can use the Explorer Mini?



## What is it exactly?

- First-of-its-kind device allowing toddlers to experience on-time mobility with age-appropriate supervision
- FDA class II medical device (US only), the only one with clearance for this age group
- Designed for children
  - 12 to 36 months of age
  - 35 lb/16 kg or less
  - 39 inches or less
- The Explorer Mini is a therapeutic device that can be used in addition to other mobility options
- Developed with leading experts/researchers

## Should my child have a specific diagnosis?

- Not diagnosis specific, any child with limited mobility could be considered
- Your child's clinician/doctor will help determine if appropriate based on functional goals
- Can be prescribed for any child with delayed mobility, whether they are expected to walk or not
- Be sure to advocate for a power mobility device in addition to other mobility devices

## What basic skills does my child need?\*

### Joystick access

Typically accessed using one or both hands, but sometimes a child will use their head, nose, or even mouth

### Head control

Able to safely manage head while in the device

### Trunk control

Developing control with posture while stationary and when moving

### Vision considerations

There are no requirements related to vision for using the Explorer Mini

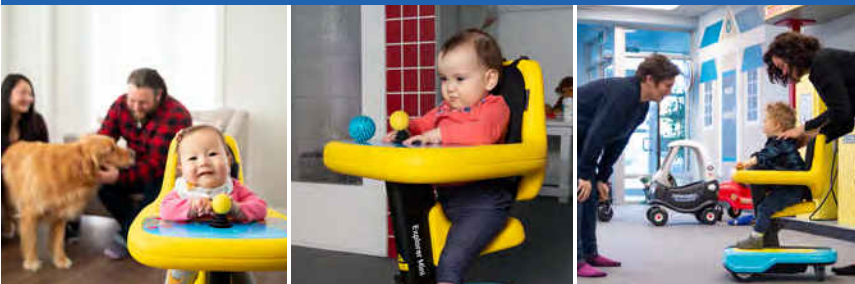
*\*The basic skills listed here are not intended to rule out a child for using the Explorer Mini, but to provide guidance. Your child's clinician/doctor will ultimately decide if your child is the appropriate fit to try the device.*



# What to expect for you and your child

The topic of power mobility can be emotionally charged, and responses can range from excitement to concern to fear. Every person's experience through this process is understandable and unique.

## Experiences for the parent/caregiver



A decreased need for assistance along with a new ability to explore.

Trouble is a good thing? This may seem odd, but with self-initiated mobility comes opportunity to get into new things.

Be ready for a range of abilities. Some children immediately start engaging with new things, while others can have difficulty separating from their parents.

## Experiences for the child



Transition and new experiences can be scary for children. It may take time for them to warm up to the Explorer Mini.

Children at this age communicate with their body language and non-verbal sounds. Pay attention to facial expressions, cooing, or laughing for cues on how they are doing.

Self-initiated movement leads to new experiences, random exploration, more opportunities to play, and increased socialization.



# How do you get an Explorer Mini?

The process and available funding options





## The journey for you and your toddler



### Awareness of delayed development

The Explorer Mini doesn't have an insurance billing code. But because it is a Class II medical device, you can submit an insurance claim. Coverage is not guaranteed and can take up to 3-6 months. This type of delay may not be preferred given your child's developmental milestones.



*The Explorer Mini does not have a funding code with any of the provincial government funding agencies. It may be covered by various private insurance companies or other funding agencies.*



### The conversation of on-time mobility

Talking to your child's doctor and other clinical team members about possible delays in development and considering a power mobility device can be difficult, but it is the only way to connect your child with possible ways to help them.



### Trial, order and delivery

Once your doctor prescribes the EM for your toddler (in the US) or your clinical team recommends a trial (in Canada), then it's time to try it out! This may take place with a PT or OT if your child is already receiving these services. If the trial goes well, you can order the device through a provider by paying for it yourself, going through your insurance, or using alternative funding options.



### Exploration begins

Your child's occupational/physical therapist (OT/PT) will provide you with instructions and recommendations on how your toddler can and should use the Explorer Mini, and how to best include it into your child's routine.



#### Helpful resource: Doctor's prescription first if in the United States

Because the Explorer Mini is a Class II medical device, a doctor's prescription is required to trial and/or purchase the device. Your OT/PT can help you have the conversation of power mobility with your doctor.





# Time to try the Explorer Mini! What might it look like?

Let's look at a few general recommendations that could help you, your toddler, and your OT/PT through the trial process.

## The environment



A familiar and natural environment for your child, such as your home or therapy clinic, should be considered. It's best to limit distractions and have only one person provide direction. Also, try not to overcrowd your toddler.

## Preparation stage



Giving your child the opportunity to become familiar with the Explorer Mini could help the process. Allow them to look at and touch the device while sitting next to you to help decrease fears, increase interest, and promote a smooth transition.



### Helpful tip

Success varies with trials. Your child might sit unsupported outside of the device, explore the base of the device with their feet, or even engage with the joystick while in the device. All of these interactions demonstrate a successful learning experience. (Hanna, Sanders, & Stuckey, 2020)

## Exploration stage



This is when your toddler sits in the Explorer Mini and gets used to being in this new device. It's important to promote positive interactions with the device at this stage.

## Engagement stage



Time for take off! The Explorer Mini provides your child with the ability to explore and engage with their environment. You may even see that your child begins self-initiated, purposeful movements.



# How do I purchase an Explorer Mini for my toddler?

## Insurance coverage

The Explorer Mini doesn't have an insurance billing code. But because it is a Class II medical device, you can submit an insurance claim. Coverage is not guaranteed and can take up to 3-6 months. This type of delay may not be preferred given your child's developmental milestones.



*If you have private insurance, funding for the Explorer Mini might be an option. Check your policy to make sure you have sufficient funds to meet your needs. Funding varies by province. Ask your OT/PT/equipment provider to assist you with funding options.*

## Out-of-pocket

If don't have insurance or prefer not to use it to save time, you can consider purchasing it yourself. We understand this option may not be for everyone and have priced the Explorer Mini significantly lower than other traditional mobility devices. You may also submit a claim to insurance after your purchase.

## Alternative funding

Flexible Spending Accounts or Health Savings Accounts can be considered. Other considerations are charitable options like the Permobil Foundation. Finance options such as Care Credit also exist. Use the QR code to the right to find a list of possible alternative funding options in the United States.



*There are various alternative funding sources. Your OT/PT/equipment provider and parent groups are great resources Use the QR code to the right to find a list of possible funding options for Canada.*

Scan the QR codes to view the alternative funding resources available for you.



United States  
Funding Guide



Canada  
Funding Guide



It's here! How  
should we use it?

Let's have some fun





## Let's review the key takeaways

### Maximize early learning



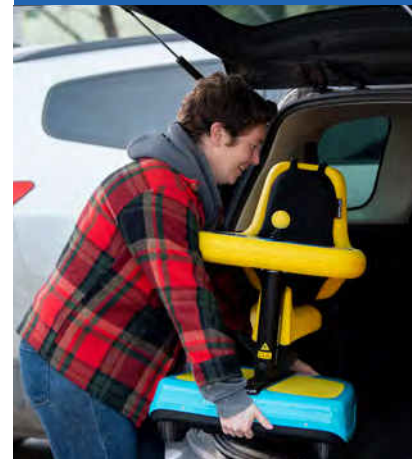
Explorer Mini is designed to maximize early learning and help aid in the achievement of key developmental milestones by introducing self-initiated movement for children with mobility impairments.

### Independence through exploration



The Explorer Mini allows your toddler to actively choose how they explore their environment and interact with others, instead of passive observation (e.g. riding in a stroller).

### Exploration made easy



A design that is lightweight, simple to transport, and has a playful look that allows your toddler to explore a variety of settings with ease.

### Developmentally inspired seating



Every detail of the Explorer Mini was designed with a specific developmental purpose to promote safe, stable, and upright postures.





## How often should my toddler use the Explorer Mini?

01

Right now, there is no specific recommended time for your toddler to be in the Explorer Mini. The time it takes for each child to feel confident and comfortable varies.

02

The Explorer Mini is meant to be a way for your toddler to play in and explore their environment, while developing their endurance and postural control. But it is not meant to be a mobility device for all day use.

03

Allow the child to both play with the device and take rest breaks as needed. You're best at determining your child's response to it.

04

Keep it fun and spontaneous! Encourage and praise your child when they show interest.

**Note:** If your child is receiving OT/PT services, this would be a great topic to discuss with them for specific suggestions.



### Did you know?

Other similar devices, such as modified ride-on toy cars, have been studied a bit more closely. Recommendations range from spending 20-30 minutes a day to 5.2 hours a week!



## Let's have fun!

### Red light, green Light

Someone is the stoplight. When they say green light, that means go! When they say red light, that means stop!

A great game to play friends or siblings.

### Car wash

Place two cardboard boxes next to each other to create a "tunnel".

Driving through the boxes is a fun game and teaches driving skills.

### Simon says

Have an adult play "Simon".

Give directions to your toddler and others.



### Popcorn

Place bubble wrap on the floor and have your child run over it!

The popping noises are fun and exciting, and teaches them cause and effect.

Pro tip! Put colored paper under the bubble wrap to increase visibility.

**Note:** This game might not be suitable if your child has a significant startle response or negative reaction to loud noises.

### Obstacle course

Use toys and objects for your toddler to drive through and around, or even to knock over.

This activity can involve a variety of skills including navigation, visual, reaching, hand-eye coordination, and cause and effect.

### I Spy

This game can be played in the home or in a safe place outside.

Walk with your toddler and call out what you "spy", while they drive the Explorer Mini.

Keep it simple "I spy a tree" or make it harder "I spy something green".



### Bowling

Arrange plastic bowling pins in any pattern.

Have your child roll a ball or use the Explorer Mini to knock them down.



# Let's have fun!

## Musical “chairs”

Designate spots on the floor by placing markers or dots in a circle (just like chairs).

Start the music and have everyone go around the markers. Stop the music and have them claim one.

Make it easier by having the child just stop and go with the music, or make it harder by eliminating spaces as you go.

## Scavenger hunt

Spread your toddler's favorite toys around the room.

Make it harder by partially hiding them, or make it easier by placing them in sight.



## Soccer

Get a large ball and make a goal post/net.

Have the child use the Explorer Mini to push the ball into the net to score.



## Making music

Place a musical mat on the floor, like a musical piano mat.

Have your toddler drive the Explorer Mini over the mat to make music!

## Family walks

Find a safe, paved walking path for a fun, family activity.

Let them ride it to get the mail with you if you have a community mailbox in your neighborhood.

## Family field trips

Once your toddler is comfortable, take Explorer Mini on the go!

Have more family fun together at the zoo, aquarium, or park.

## Chasing bubbles

Blow bubbles and have your child chase them while in the Explorer Mini.

**Note:** Do not use the Explorer Mini in environments that may cause a risk of injury, for example close to traffic, staircases, high obstacles and steep hills.

# Resources

Hanna, L., Sanders, K., & Stucky, E. (2020). Explorer Mini Introduction Protocol.

Jones, M., McEwen, I., & Neas, B. (2012). Effects of power wheelchairs on the development and function of young children with severe motor impairments. *Pediatric Physical Therapy*, 24(2), 131-140. <https://doi.org/10.1097/PEP.0b013e31824c5fdc>

Kenyon, L. K., Blank, K., Meengs, J., & Schultz, A. M. (2020). "Make it fun": a qualitative study exploring key aspects of power mobility interventions for children. *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, 1-9.

Livingstone, R. & Field, D. (2015). The child and family experience of power mobility: a qualitative synthesis. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 57(4), 317-327. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dmcn.12633>

Logan, S. W., Huang, H. H., Stahlin, K., & Galloway, J. C. (2014). Modified ride-on car for mobility and socialization: single-case study of an infant with Down syndrome. *Pediatric Physical Therapy*, 26(4), 418-426.

Plummer, T., Logan, S. W., & Morress, C. (2020). Explorer Mini: Infants' Initial Experience with a Novel Pediatric Powered Mobility Device. *Physical & Occupational Therapy In Pediatrics*, 41(2), 192-208.

Rosen, L., Plummer, T., Sabet, A., Lange, M. L., & Livingstone, R. (2018). RESNA position on the application of power mobility devices for pediatric users. *Assistive Technology*.

Ragonesi, C. B., & Galloway, J. C. (2012). Short-term, early intensive power mobility training: Case report of an infant at risk for cerebral palsy. *Pediatric Physical Therapy*, 24(2), 141-148. <https://doi.org/10.1097/PEP.0b013e31824c764b>



## For your little explorer

