**WHEELCHAIR TRAINING - Motorized**

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| **15-30 MINUTES a DAY*** Be patient and really positive
* Students are good at discriminating whether we are just making them do something in therapy or if they have a bigger goal.
* It is important that the activity in wheelchair training does not become just one more thing my teacher / assistant / therapist is making me do.
* Empower the student - Tell the student their brothers and sisters will have to wait until they are 16 years old to drive but they get to drive now.
* Driving progression:
	+ First try pull-out activities and then move on to more realistic situations.
	+ Progress to going down hallways, going through doorways, going in and out of the bathroom with no students or very few students. It is easier to focus with no one or with few people in the hallway or classroom.
	+ Slowly and purposely add in just a few people but expect your student to regress a little bit since it is more stressful and distracting when people are wandering up and down the hallway.
	+ Keep progressing until the student is ready to move down the hallway with the entire class
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| **BEHAVIORS when driving*** Try to address in the same way a typical student would be treated
	+ Driving too fast is like running. Student needs to return to the starting point and then drive at a slower (indoor) speed. (This will depend on what the rule for running in your school is.)
	+ If the student purposely crashes then turn wheelchair off/unplug joystick for 5-20 minutes depending on the maturity of the student. If staff or other students laugh or give attention to the student for crashing then stop since the student may be seeking attention.
* If the student continues to run into things or inappropriately drives the wheelchair then you may need to get creative.
	+ Maybe tell the student “I am going to write you a ticket” or “I am going to take your driver’s license away”.
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| **STOPPING and GOING (accuracy)**Goal is not to simply understand the concept of stop and go but to learn how to stop quickly and accurately. It is essential the student can consistently stop when necessary for safety* Use commands such as [Go - Stop] or [Red light - green light]
	+ Walk next to the student while they are driving between areas of the school and encourage and cue the student to stop and go when appropriate
* (Class) Go-Go-Go Stop Game
	+ The leader turns away from the students on the opposite side of the room. The leader gives the commands “go-go-go” or “stop” randomly. The students drive or walk towards the leader and whoever reaches the leader or crosses a line on the floor first gets to be the leader.
* (Class) Musical Statues
	+ The leader plays music while the students move around. When the music stops the students have to stop. Whoever does not stop is out of the game and the last person remaining gets to be the leader. A variation can be the moving monster who will eat anyone who did not stop.
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| **DIRECTION CONTROL (accuracy)**Goal is to have the student understand that by moving the joystick in a certain direction, they are moving the wheelchair in the same direction and the accuracy in doing so. * Follow the Leader
	+ Have the student follow an adult in the gym or hallways
		- or
	+ If the student will not follow an adult then try a classmate. Classmates can be more motivating than grown-ups
		- or
	+ (Class) Have the student follow the rest of the class from the classroom to another location such as the cafeteria or the library
		- Have the student follow because it is easier than being in the middle of the pack. The assistant stays next to the student to give them cues (direction / problem solving / judgement) when appropriate.
* (Class) Line Driving (gym)
	+ Students pretend they are cars and drive / walk / run on the lines on the gym floor. This can be combined into a tag game with a noodle with the students staying on the lines.
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| **PROBLEM SOLVING in driving**Goal is to have the student move to a location in the room that requires more than an one directional command to get there (not a straight line). How will they get from point A to point B. * Choose a destination in the room and ask the child to go there. May need a stuffed animal/doll/truck at the end of the destination to motivate the student.
* (Class) Line Leader
	+ Student is the line leader as the class moves from the classroom to another area in school. Classmates will need verbal cues to walk at the student’s driving pace and not to pass or walk too fast.
* (Class) Free Play (Free time for the class to play: preschool and kindergarten)
	+ Set-up the classroom so there are wheelchair driving lanes between furniture and equipment so the student is able to drive to the areas she wants to.
	+ Talk with the student’s class before hand so they know what to expect. Give her space to drive and don’t play with the joystick on the power wheelchair.
	+ Student drives at a slow speed and turns the power wheelchair OFF when she gets to the area she wants to
* Treasure Hunt or I Spy Game
	+ (Class) Students can pretend they are pirates and hunt for hidden treasure around the room or in several rooms. Scavenger hunts are a fun option where children locate items on a list or that relate to a current learning theme.
		- or
	+ Place pictures (something that interests the student such as dolls, trucks, food) on the walls/doorways in the hallways and have the student drive and find them.
		- or
	+ Place toy trucks or stuffed animals on the floor in the hallways and have the student drive up to them to collect them
		- or
	+ Student goes grocery shopping and drives up to plastic food laying on the floor and collect them in their lap, basket, or backpack with help if needed.
* (Class) Leap Frog
	+ Students drive or walk/run from lily pad to lily pad to stay out of the water. Paper lilypads or colors / numbers / letters / pictures of animals / child’s name are taped on the floor.
* (Class) Flashlight Discovery
	+ Tape a flashlight to the wheelchair and dim the lights. Have the students drive or walk around shining their light on items in a large room
* (Class) Hide and seek
	+ Student drives to various areas in a room or various rooms to locate other classmates who are hidden (in the beginning the person hiding should be somewhat visible so the student knows where they are going)
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| **JUDGEMENT** Ability to recognize there is an obstacle in the way and the reason they need to avoid it. They might hurt someone else, themselves, damage the obstacle, or at the very least their chair* When you are pushing the student in their manual wheelchair down the hallway and you stop, tell them why. “I had to stop your chair. These children were walking by and I did not want to bump them. That would hurt.” Keep it simple.
* Pull-out session - Place obstacles purposely in the student’s way such as a bolster or chair.
	+ Explain to the student why we are doing what we are doing so they can practice being a safe driver.
	+ See if they will stop or go around the obstacles
* Work on more real-life situations such as hallways, doorways, bathroom, classroom, crossing the street at recess. Explain to the student:
	+ Why they should stop and wait or why it is okay to go.
	+ Why is it an okay time to drive out of the classroom into the hallway.
	+ Why they are okay to go fast or the need to go slow.
	+ Why the wheelchair needs to be turned off.
* Awards can be built in their school day to encourage the student and give them positive reinforcement for safe driving
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