

# O&M in Early Childhood/Transition to School

Dr. Bronwen Scott  
O&M Specialist (COMS)  
Developed for RIDBC Remwick Centre

---

---

---

---

---

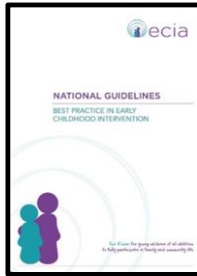
---

---

---

## Early Childhood O&M

- O&M Specialists work within the **Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) Best Practice National Guidelines.**



Dr. Bronwen Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RIDBC Remwick Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Early Childhood O&M

- The foundation for O&M skills are built during infancy and early childhood.
- O&M concepts and skills are developed in the child's home environment and community.
- Parents are a child's first and most important teacher.

Dr. Bronwen Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RIDBC Remwick Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Early Childhood O&M

- Work within a transdisciplinary team/key worker approach.
- **Family-centred** and **strengths-based** practice:
  - The family is the primary decision-making authority.
  - Assessment and intervention is **routine-based** and conducted in natural environments (i.e. the child's home and community environments).
  - O&M specialist concentrates primarily on **supporting and strengthening the capacity of parents** (and significant others) through coaching and modelling O&M best practice.

Dr. Bronwen Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RIDBC Research Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Early Childhood O&M

- A routine—based approach is also used to embed O&M skills and techniques into the child's school day.



Dr. Bronwen Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RIDBC Research Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Principles of Early O&M

- O&M intervention for infants and toddlers includes:
  - Motor development, including the development of **purposeful** and **self-initiated** movement.
  - Sensory skill development.
  - Concept development.
  - Mobility aid use.

Dr. Bronwen Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RIDBC Research Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Principles of Early O&M



Dr. Bruneau Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RSDC Research Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### O&M with Infants & Toddlers

- O&M experiences must occur **daily** and **throughout the day**.
- Build into the family's **everyday routines**.



Dr. Bruneau Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RSDC Research Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### O&M with Infants & Toddlers

- Sensory experiences and body awareness that will facilitate the development of **discrimination skills** and **position in space**.

Dr. Bruneau Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RSDC Research Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### O&M with Infants

- Hands-on experiences that facilitate concept development including:
  - Object concepts
  - Play and exploration skills
  - Early environmental experiences



Dr. Breeman Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RISEC Network Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### O&M with Infants

- Environmental awareness and exploration.
- Establishment of **social relationships** that foster confidence to move and explore.
- Facilitation of optimal independence in **daily routines**, including movement to and from storage and activity areas.

Dr. Breeman Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RISEC Network Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### O&M with Infants

- Use of routines to provide **repetition, generalization, and functionality.**
- Environmental modifications:
  - For example, adapting children’s first learning environments such as the cot or first floor play space so as to promote their understanding of spatial relations and purposeful movement exploration.

Dr. Breeman Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RISEC Network Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### O&M Techniques

- Prior to the introduction of modified early childhood O&M techniques, there are critical developmental skills that provide the foundation for later protection, alignment, and search methods.

Dr. Brannon Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for NICHD Research Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### O&M Techniques

- Developmental Skills:
  - Early reaching for toys → encourages reaching for obstacles later.
  - Pursuit of a dropped toy → progress to two-handed search for object on a table.
  - Two-handed cruising along furniture and walls → foundation for one-handed trailing.

Dr. Brannon Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for NICHD Research Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Trailing

- Evolves from cruising – important O&M skill for adulthood.
- Reaching, hand search, exploration, and manipulation of objects and surfaces should be encouraged as early as possible.

Dr. Brannon Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for NICHD Research Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Body-Protection Skills

- A challenging skill for toddlers:
  - Insufficient strength in the trunk and shoulder girdle.
  - Lack of spatial orientation that allows awareness of an upcoming obstacle.
  - Developmentally appropriate distractibility and inattention.

Dr. Brannen Scott, OBM Specialist, Developed for HSGC Research Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Body-Protection Skills

- Begin with two hands extended forward
  - Extension of the arms at the waist or chest level
  - Choose **consistent** language that **everyone** uses
    - For example, "use your safe hands".



Dr. Brannen Scott, OBM Specialist, Developed for HSGC Research Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Guiding Skills

- Can be introduced as soon as a child is walking.



Dr. Brannen Scott, OBM Specialist, Developed for HSGC Research Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Guiding Skills

- Again, use consistent and agreed-upon language that the child and parent can distinguish from the parent *holding* the child's hand for safety
  - E.g. "Let's use guiding"

Dr. Brannen Scott, ODM Specialist, Developed for RESC Network  
Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Why Guiding Instead of Hand Holding?

- Control.
- **Choice-making, autonomy, and self-determination** skills.
- Appropriate means of mobility at a very young age – holding hands becomes less appropriate the older the child becomes.

Dr. Brannen Scott, ODM Specialist, Developed for RESC Network  
Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Why Guiding Instead of Hand Holding?

- It helps the child distinguish between family members (who may wish to hold the child's hand when appropriate), and non-family members.
- However, there are times when holding a young child's hand is appropriate, for example, for safety reasons.

Dr. Brannen Scott, ODM Specialist, Developed for RESC  
Network Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### However....

- Guiding should be seen as *passive*, rather than *active*, movement.
- Being guided all the time is **NOT** independent mobility.



Dr. Roseann Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for SBOAC Research Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Mobility Aid Use



- Certain toys and objects
- Pushtoyes
- Adaptive mobility devices (AMDs)
- Long canes

<https://www.bethlehchem.org/infant/infant-oral-white-cane-day/>

Dr. Roseann Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for SBOAC Research Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Importance of Early Long Cane Use



- It is the mobility tool a child will use for their life.
- “The goal of O&M is the independent movement and travel in blind children at an **age/stage appropriate time** so that children develop the perception of themselves as active movers and independent travellers” (Cutter, 2007, p.2).

Dr. Roseann Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for SBOAC Research Center 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Importance of Early Long Cane Use



Dr. Bronwen Scott, O&M Specialist,  
Developed for RIDBC Renwick Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Transition Into Education

- Follow proper guiding technique.
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the uses of the long cane (if appropriate).
- Establish and maintain posture while travelling with or without a long cane.
- Move safely in a familiar environment.
- Use the full range of beginning O & M skills to travel safely and independently in familiar environments, under supervision.

Dr. Bronwen Scott, O&M Specialist,  
Developed for RIDBC Renwick Centre 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Advocacy for Independent Travel

- Parents and educators need to advocate for children to be responsible for their own travel, and that **physical contact is not necessary** once the child knows the skill.
- Children who are blind will never develop full confidence in their own movement and travel if they think someone is always watching or monitoring them.
- Have **high expectations** for the child's independence and encourage others to also have these high expectations.

Dr. Bronwen Scott, O&M Specialist, Developed for RIDBC Renwick Centre  
2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## References and Further Reading

- Anthony, T.L., Bleier, H., Fazzi, D.L., Kish, D. & Pogrund, R.L. (2002). Mobility focus: developing early skills for orientation and mobility, In R. L. Pogrund, D.L. Fazzi, & Lampert, J.S. (Eds.). *Early focus: Working with young blind and visually impaired children and their families* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 326-404). New York, NY: American Foundation for the Blind. [Renwick library 362.41083 POGR]
- Cutter, J. (2007). *Independent movement and travel in blind children: A promotion model*. Chapters 2 & 3). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Pub.
- Scott, B. (2008). Early intervention orientation and mobility: A Western Australian perspective. *International Journal of Orientation & Mobility*, 1(1), 70-71.
- Scott, B. (2016). Belonging, being and becoming: Implementing orientation and mobility within the early years learning framework. *Journal of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment*, 9(1), 10-22.

Dr. Rosemary Scott, OBM Specialist, Developed for RIMM Research Centre 2018

## References and Further Reading

- Skellenger, A.C. & Sapp, W.K. (2010). Teaching orientation and mobility for the early childhood years. In W.R. Weiner, R.L. Welsh, & B.B. Blasch (Eds.). *Foundations of orientation and mobility: History and theory*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Vol. II, pp. 163-201)
- Wells, K. (2008). The missing link: A collaborative approach to early childhood orientation and mobility. *International Journal of Orientation & Mobility*, 1(1), 57-61.

Dr. Rosemary Scott, OBM Specialist, Developed for RIMM Research Centre 2018