



Children's Hospital Colorado

01 November 2023

**SUBJECT: Letter of Medical Necessity for Safe Toddles BELT CANE for blind children**

The Safe Toddles BELT CANE should be considered as an absolute medical necessity for mobility-impaired blind children.

I am Immediate Past Chief of the Pediatric Ophthalmology at The Children's Hospital of Colorado. I am a fellowship-trained subspecialist, with residency training in both pediatrics and ophthalmology, and fellowship training in pediatric ophthalmology at the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children. I am Board Certified in Ophthalmology (1991), Preventive Medicine (1988), and Pediatrics (1984).

During my career in pediatric ophthalmology, I've observed the devastating impact that early onset irreversible severe vision impairment has on young children's development. These children experience delayed motor, language, emotional, social, and cognitive development, with lifelong consequences. School-age children with vision impairment can also experience lower levels of educational achievement.

I have evaluated the published papers, video demonstrations provided by Safe Toddles, and positive comments from a patient's family who used the belt cane. I have concluded that there are children for whom mobility devices are necessary, not optional, for safety. Children born blind or mobility visually impaired are at-risk of delayed development when they are encouraged to achieve one-year-old motor milestone skills without a mobility tool. Mobility visually impaired is a newly published term that is used to quickly identify a children's visual impairment that is a safety hazard, because they have difficulty seeing in front of themselves when ambulating and require a hand hold for direction and safety.

By age 11 months, children diagnosed with blindness or mobility visual impairment receive significant benefit in achieving independent walking milestones when wearing pediatric belt canes. Safe Toddles has demonstrated that toddlers can achieve motor milestones on time, 14 months walking wide-based gait, 18 months walking well, 21-months walking downstairs independently, 24 months running. These children wearing their belt canes most of the day learn to be independent in navigating obstacles in front of them, stepping on/off curbs, and going up/down the stairs.





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The belt cane is recommended for children with blindness or mobility visual impairment who:

- Are age 11 months or older.
- Often rely on feeling through their hands to determine surfaces such as walls, doorways, and obstacles on the floor.
- Are independent with mobility but require use of vocal cues and a 1 handheld assist (HHA) to limit running into obstacles in front of them due to their deficits in their vision.
- Demonstrate difficulty maintaining their balance, difficulty with quiet standing.
- Have vision deficits that cause a safety risk from running into obstacles and causing injury/fractures.
- Are often carried due to not being able to navigate busy environments.
- Do not purposefully navigate within their homes to interact with toys and others 5-7 hours a day.
- Do not play with age-appropriate independence with toys and peers.
- Do not navigate around their school like peers their age.
- Do not navigate with age-appropriate independence with safety in their community.

For blind toddlers to achieve independent walking, I believe the significant value of the Safe Toddlers' Pediatric Belt Cane cannot be overstated. Safe Toddlers' O&M (Orientation and Mobility) specialist Dr. Grace Ambrose-Zaken meticulously studies the before and after outcomes of these patients utilizing the Safe Toddlers BELT CANE. Published analysis, and video on their website and YouTube show significant promise to alleviate some of the barriers to learners with blindness or mobility visual impairment developing effective trust strategies, positive mental health outcomes and other important developmental outcomes through the provision of increased safety from a wearable, age-appropriate mobility tool. The Belt Cane is THE most significant innovation for blind toddlers, to date. The hands-free cane far exceeds all current therapies and vastly improves the outcomes for those born blind.



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I recommend the pediatric belt cane for children who are blind or mobility visually impaired because they are unsafe and unbalanced whenever they walk without a mobility device. The pediatric belt cane is a device that enables toddlers with early onset blindness or mobility visual impairment to navigate in natural environments at home and in the community with independent safety. Children with blindness or mobility visual impairment who grow up capable of walking and running by age 2, are less likely to experience delayed motor, language, emotional, social, and cognitive development. The belt cane used regularly each day will have lifelong lasting positive impact.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert W. Enzenauer MD".

\_\_\_\_\_, MD

Robert W. Enzenauer, MD, MPH, MSS, MBA  
Professor of Ophthalmology and Pediatrics  
Immediate Past Chief of Ophthalmology at The Children's Hospital Colorado

Brigadier General (GOL), US Army Retired, Senior Flight Surgeon  
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