

# Safe Mobility Times

January 2021 Volume 1 Issue 1

When you look at this picture what do you see?



Do you see a little girl eating an ice cream? Yes. Julia is enjoying her reward for walking independently to the freezer with the purpose of obtaining of an ice cream treat.

Julia is three-years-old and has light perception, she sees light, but not shapes or details. Now observe her left toe curled around the shaft of her pediatric belt cane.

This observable sign indicates Julia is making sure she keeps track of something especially important to her- her cane.

## Belt cane tip:

Provide your toddler with a specific destination and objective.

# Our Mission

Safe Toddles' mission is to provide toddlers who are blind with a solution for walking safely – a pediatric belt cane for clear path detection.

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Join us @safetoddles  
(Facebook, Twitter, Tok-tok, Instagram)

## How to Obtain a Cane

**Purchase a cane** - \$180\* per cane set - cane ships approximately in three to five weeks.

**Free Canes** - We are committed providing free canes to any child in need, because belt canes are essential safety equipment that enables toddlers with visual impairments to develop to their full potential.

**Option one** - provide videos and feedback - cane ships in two to three months.

Safe Toddles seeks families and professionals to **join our video library** by contributing before and with belt cane videos. These videos assist in improving belt cane design, demonstrating outcomes to potential users and demonstrates the abilities of toddlers and preschoolers who are blind once they acquire consistently safe mobility.

Everyone who is obtaining a pediatric belt cane is encouraged to consider participating by submitting videos to us - we need you!

**Option two** - Submit measurements cane ships in four to six months.

\*Limited quantity of reduced cost cane sets available to families (submit in-take form, use buy now to pay with a credit/debit card)

## Save the Dates!

### March 18, 2021

Dr. Grace Ambrose-Zaken will be presenting double session the importance of safe mobility to achieving developmental milestones for children who are congenitally blind or severe visually impaired **Webinar 10 to 11 AM PST**

To Register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEIc-qtrjoqGtbVz8BkcTNNN8NwCflt4rIx>

### March 26, 2021

Dr. Grace Ambrose-Zaken will be presenting double session the importance of safe mobility to achieving developmental milestones for children who are congenitally blind or severe visually impaired at the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood **Conference**

**Part I 8:30 to 10 am MST and Part II 10:30 to noon MST**

To Register: <https://denverearlychildhood.org/trainings-events/rocky-mountain-early-childhood-conference/>



# Safe Toddles Podcast

<https://www.safetoddles.org/podcast>

## Safe Toddles' Podcast



Kelvin Crosby, CEO  
Smart Guider, Inc

Dr. Grace Ambrose-Zaken,  
President & CEO, Safe Toddles

## Episodes

### December 2020

1. Host introductions
2. The downside of unsafe mobility for blind babies
3. Exploring Kelvin Crosby's Journey living with Ushers Type II.
4. Holiday Special – Kelvin's tips for multi-sensory holidays.

### January 2021

5. Interview with George Stern: Growing up with Retinoblastoma.
6. Interview with Ann Byington: Growing up with RLF/ROP.
7. Interview with Michael Byington: Growing up with low vision, bi-optic driving and long cane use.
8. Interview with Danielle Montour: Growing up with Retinoblastoma.

## Upcoming Podcast Episodes

### February 2021

9. How to identify who needs a pediatric belt cane.
10. Introducing the pediatric belt cane for the first time by age.
11. How to stand up wearing the belt cane and other important skills.
12. Blind toddlers taught us everything we know about using pediatric belt canes.

### March 2021

13. Geri Darko, COMS discusses her experiences with pediatric belt cane with three students.
14. O&M experiences with pediatric belt canes
15. O&M experiences with pediatric belt canes
16. O&M experiences with pediatric belt canes

### April 2021

17. Family experiences with pediatric belt canes
18. Family experiences with pediatric belt canes
19. Family experiences with pediatric belt canes
20. Family experiences with pediatric belt canes

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# Join Team Safe Mobility Today!

Families tell us that they can't believe their eyes when they see how much and how fast their children are able to move because of their belt canes. Before belt canes they had to be carried or pushed in a stroller, now wearing their belt canes they can keep up with the group and they are eager to explore their world.

It's easy, convenient and makes a difference all year long!

Your monthly gift, whatever the size, will make a big impact. It will provide families with the opportunity to have quick access to this vital safe mobility tool that enables independence.

Independent walking is fundamental to learning as walking infants having significantly larger vocabularies than their age-matched peers who are not yet walking.



Joining [Team Safe Mobility](#) is easy! Make your gift [online](#). If you are using a credit card, please check "monthly donation" on the PayPal form.

## DONATE

Help Safe Toddles give children who are blind the freedom of independent mobility.

A gift of \$ **20** provides shipping materials.

A gift of \$ **35** provides a set of white cane rods.

A gift of \$ **65** provides a full set of 3D printed tips and handles.

A gift of \$ **80** provides a fully customize belt.

A gift of \$**180** to purchase a belt cane for a child on our wait list.

Donate by sending a check/money order to Safe Toddles  
61 Kretch Circle, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590 (**updated  
COVID location**).

Donate using debit/credit card

[www.safetoddles.org/donate](http://www.safetoddles.org/donate)



# Safe Mobility Moment

## You Can See Me, But I Can't See the Path Ahead

I remember it like it was yesterday, riding in our family sedan, my little brother Hugh with his hands over his eyes proclaiming, “you can't see me” and my parents encouraging me to go along with his hypothesis. Which was, if I can't see you, you can't see me. Anyone can forgive a preschooler for misunderstanding how vision works –but as adults it is important to know what it means when a toddler who is blind cannot see.

**Blind toddlers in a well-lit room are unsafe.** Lights only help sighted people navigate around obstacles. Observe this historical photo- the point of view of the sighted photographer suggests these children could safely step away from the piano.

Now consider the view of nursery school children who are blind—each one stands upon an island of safe ground. They have no vision to look upon the floor ahead- they cannot see where the furniture is placed, the door stands silent – is it half open or closed?



Children singing in nursery school for the blind (1964).

Many would have us believe blind children are equally safe as sighted children because they can memorize where all the furniture lives. **Please stop repeating this tale.** Ask yourself, if memory kept us safe, then why do we sighted people turn on the lights to move about our homes?

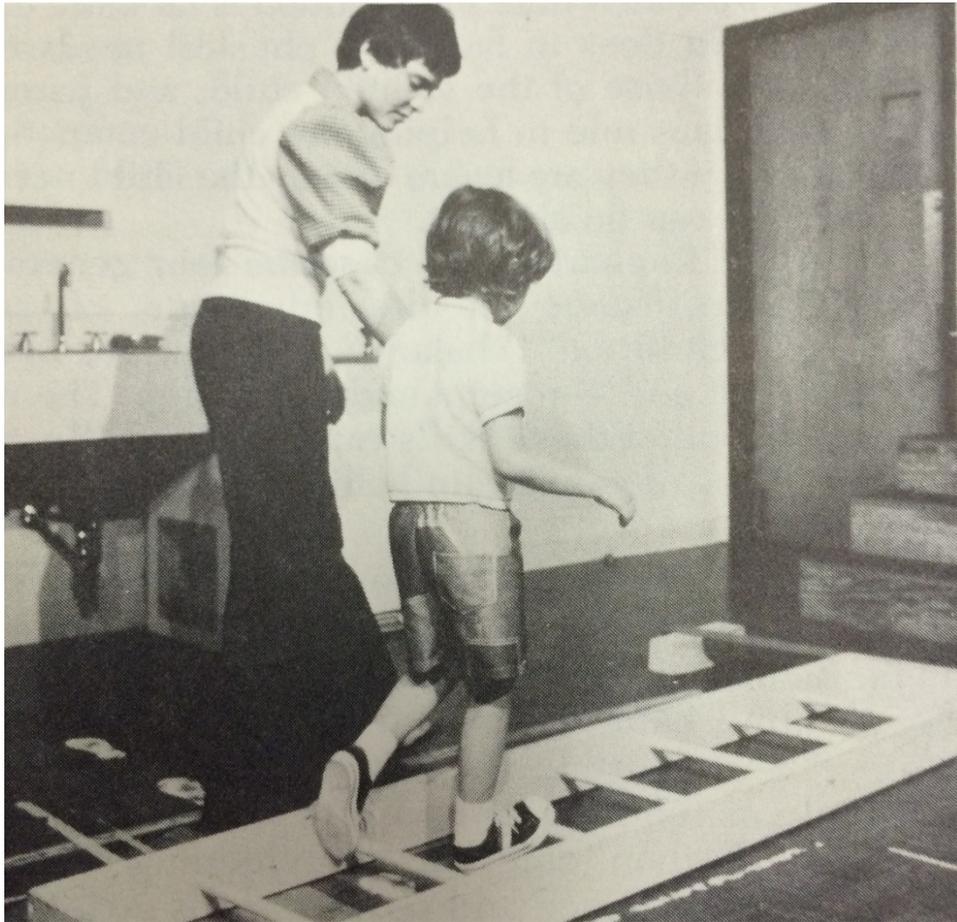
These nursery school children are prisoners on their islands of safety because they must risk injury to escape from where they stand. The negative consequences of walking blind are visible; slow pace, bent posture, wide-gait. Blind children without canes cannot quickly run away and they know the risks. That is why they move very slowly, keeping their weight back, their shoulders hunched in anticipation.

**Moving nonvisually over time leaves lasting impacts.**

This 1966 physical therapist is attempting to improve a blind child's posture through stretching his shoulders back. The impact can only be temporary because she is treating the consequence, not the cause of his poor posture- walking without warning.



This sighted occupational therapist in 1976 is attempting to improve a blind child's gait by having him step between the rungs of a ladder. She sees the ladder as a sighted person does, as squares of empty space. Consider his point of view- He can't see the empty squares, he can't see. Foot shuffling is a consequence of being unable to see the ground ahead, she is attempting to treat the consequence and instead of fixing the cause of his poor gait.



**Why did it take until 1945 before blind adults got white canes?**

It took knowledge of what was missing. Adventitiously blinded veterans of WWII knew what it was to see the path ahead. That is why they demanded a better, longer white cane. White canes are essential to safe mobility, they reach out into the path to tell the user whether the path is blocked or clear.

That is why we give our canes away for free- to free blind children from their islands of safety!

Wearing pediatric belt canes provides reliable safe mobility. The belt cane ensures effective path information everywhere they go.

