

Outdoor Safety

This leaflet provides advice on how you can help keep your child with disabilities safe outside. Children with disabilities may have little awareness of danger and may need a form of safety restraint to protect them when outdoors.

This leaflet was compiled by the Hammersmith and Fulham Disabled Children's Team Occupational Therapists following a collaborative parent workshop with the Queensmill Trust Occupational Therapy team. The leaflet is shared here with their permission and is relevant to families living in any local authority unless specified with a *.

General considerations

- Children with disabilities should be closely supervised / hand held at all times when outdoors.
- Consider strategy for managing absconding behaviour. Explore reasons why is the child is running away (eg to get something, to get away from something, as a game). See Powerpoint presentation "Keeping Children with ASD Safe" produced by the Queensmill Trust Therapy team for more details.
- Explain to child where you are going using visuals (symbols, pictures, PECS cards) to reduce the child's anxiety. Discuss with school team to see how they manage.
- Consider using ID tags / tracking devices etc with child depending on level of risk.
- Carry an Alert Form with child's photo with you (that can be given to police in the event of child running away).

Examples of possible solutions

- Walking reins or wrist strap. Discuss the use of this with school Occupational Therapy team.
- Some children may be safer using a buggy or wheelchair. The local wheelchair service* does not usually provide a wheelchair for safety reasons if child is able to walk. Larger buggies are sometimes funded by charities and wheelchairs can be hired from a number of places. Only consider using these if other techniques have been tried and where there is an extreme risk to the child if not used as it is easy for child and carer to become dependent on this and restrict the child's independence and development of skills.
- If child has sensory integration issues discuss with Occupational Therapy team whether there are any strategies that could be used (eg carrying a heavy back pack, ear defenders, distraction toys, cap with peak etc) as these can be calming and may reduce the risk of running away when walking outside.

Examples of suppliers

Harnesses

- Crelling Harnesses – walking reins and straps. Crelling offers a sale or return facility to allow for a 14 day trial period. If the equipment is not returned they will send an invoice. If it is returned there is a charge for postage and packing, www.crelling.com 01253 852 298.

- Fledglings – walking reins attached to a back pack, www.fledglings.org.uk
0845 458 1124 / 01799 541 807.

Sensors / ID tags

- See Sensors and Tracking Devices Leaflet for details of ID tags, tracking options and temporary tattoo suppliers.

Buggies / wheelchairs

- Maclaren produce a Special Needs Buggy for larger children (up to 45kg)
<https://www.maclarenmajorelite.co.uk>

The lists of companies provided in these information leaflets are not approved lists. Hammersmith & Fulham Council accept no liability with regard to any purchases from the companies listed. The list of companies provided is not exhaustive.

**relevant to Hammersmith and Fulham residents only*