

Positioning and Transferring Students in Wheelchairs

By: Bebe Bode



Some students who use wheelchairs are capable of moving around the school using their motorized wheelchair, or by using their own power to push their own wheelchair. Although these students are skilled at using their wheelchair, there will be times when they find themselves in need of assistance. Some students may need help with traveling from place to place or transferring in and out of their wheelchair.

If you see a student struggling to open a door or to maneuver a doorway to get into a room, don't automatically assume they want or need your help. Sometimes calling attention to someone's inability may cause them embarrassment and they may get offended. First, ask the student if they want your help. If so, then ask how they would like you to help them. When doing this you give the student control over their body and movement.

Some children may not be able to tell you what or how they need help if they have a cognitive disability, limited language skills, or are non-verbal. It is still important to look and listen for vocalizations, facial expressions, or pointing from these students. The student may be making these gestures to



FHF of Jefferson
201 Evans Road
Building One, Suite 100
Harahan, LA 70123
504.888.9111
504.888.0246 (fax)
www.fhfjefferson.org



Like us on Facebook:
[Facebook.com/
Fhfjefferson](https://www.facebook.com/Fhfjefferson)



Follow us on twitter:
[Twitter.com/
FHFofJefferson](https://www.twitter.com/FHFofJefferson)

-Continued to next page

communicate their discomfort from sitting to long. If you move them and you hear a sigh of relief, then you know you've interpreted their communication to you.

It is also important for you to communicate with the student when you are going to be moving them from place to place, or if you are going to be transferring them from the wheelchair, etc... Although they may not have control over their bodies, communicating with them about where, when, why and how you are going to be moving or touching them is not only respectful, but lets them know exactly what is about to happen to them and why.

Most students that are in wheelchairs do not stay in them all day long. They may need to be transferred to the toilet, a diapering area, to another piece of equipment, etc... The position changes are important to help with skin breakdown, fatigue, and tightness of the muscles.

To help a student move to and from their wheelchair, you must first learn how to make those transfers safely and comfortably for the student and for yourself. Learning how to transfer and position a student can be very difficult. It must be done correctly so it does not bring harm to you, or to them.

Families Helping Families of Jefferson will be holding training on **Transferring & Positioning** on **Tuesday, May 19, 2015, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, East Bank Regional Library, 4747 West Napoleon Ave., Metairie, LA.** We'd love for you to join us for this event.



FHF of Jefferson
201 Evans Road
Building One, Suite 100
Harahan, LA 70123
504.888.9111
504.888.0246 (fax)
www.fhfjefferson.org

Changing Lives. Every Day.



Like us on Facebook:
[Facebook.com/
Fhfjefferson](https://www.facebook.com/Fhfjefferson)



Follow us on twitter:
[Twitter.com/
FHFofJefferson](https://www.twitter.com/FHFofJefferson)