

Learning About Disabilities

Mobility/Dexterity Impairments

Mobility/Dexterity Impairment is a broad term referring to any physical disability that limits the physical function of one or more limbs.

Causes

Individuals can have mobility or dexterity impairments for a number of reasons including, but not limited to:

- congenital conditions
- missing or malformed appendages.
- traumatic or repetitive injury to the spinal cord
- neuromuscular disorders

Commonly Associated Diagnoses

- Paralysis
- Amputation
- Arthritis
- Muscular dystrophy
- Multiple sclerosis
- Cerebral palsy

Implications

Mobility/Dexterity impairments can impact the individuals strength, speed, endurance, and coordination. Persons with mobility impairments might require the use of a wheelchair or motorized scooter, while others may walk with the assistance of braces, canes, or walkers.

Dexterity deficits do not always involve the legs. Some individuals may have limitations that are specific to arm, hand, or even finger movement.

Accessibility

Ramps are essential for individuals using wheelchairs or scooters and helpful to those who have difficulty with stairs. The addition of a ramp either on the inside or outside of buildings can make a big difference.

Elevators or lifts allow individuals with mobility/dexterity impairments to move about throughout the entire building.

Restroom accessibility is essential for persons with mobility impairments. Accessible bathrooms should be located to provide persons with mobility impairments easy access.

Classroom and laboratory seating needs to be evaluated for its use by persons with mobility and dexterity impairments. Consideration of desks, tables, chairs, or any other furniture is necessary.

Laboratory experiments or projects should be reviewed against the limitations of the person with the disability. Lab assistants and partners are appropriate ways for students to participate fully in the curriculum.

Field assignments and trips can pose difficulties for students with mobility or dexterity disabilities. Some students might not be able to participate in these events unless the appropriate arrangements are made in advance.

"It's not about our disabilities; it's our abilities that count." —Chris Burke, NDSS Goodwill Ambassador