

# HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD SAFELY ACCESS STAIRS

# WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING?

- The most important thing for each child/student is that they safely access the stairs in some manner independently ,if at all possible....whether that is crawling on hands and knees, bumping down on their bottom, or walking up and down while holding the rail.
- You want a safe independent method so that they are safe if an adult is not around when they want to explore on their own!

# TYPICAL PROGRESSION OF STAIR ACCESS:

- Crawling up on hands & knees. Sliding down backwards on belly or bumping down on their bottom.
- Walking up & down moving both feet to each step while holding the wall/rail for balance.
- Walking up & down moving both feet to each step independently.
- Walking up & down alternating feet while holding the wall/rail for balance.
- Walking up & down alternating feet independently

# LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE ON THE STAIRS:

- Independently walking up & down without holding a rail or hand....Our Goal!
- Child holding the rail
- Hand-over-hand assist on the rail
- Holding rail & other hand held
- Holding rail, hand held & touch prompts to legs to help with progression
- Hand-over-hand assist on the rail and physical assistance (25-50-75%) to help them advance their leg to the next step.

## IMPORTANT TIPS FOR WALKING UP THE STAIRS:

- **Always support them from behind.** Try to keep 1 stride behind so that your body is close to block them if they should lose their balance backwards.
- Make sure your child/student holds the rail(s). If they need help, place your hand over their hand on the rail.
- If more assistance is needed, hold their other wrist, helping them shift their “nose over their toes.”
- Offer more physical assistance to their leg or trunk as needed for safe physical access.



# TIPS FOR WALKING DOWN THE STAIRS

- **Always place yourself in front of them on the step.** You will be walking backwards. Try to keep close, within 1 stride length.
- Always have your child hold the rail(s). Place your hand over their hand on the rail if they need more assist.
- If more assistance is needed offer to hold their other wrist.
- Support them at their trunk/waist if more support is needed, and/or to help them slow down while stepping.



Always keep them close to you to decrease the distance that they could potentially fall if they should lose their balance.

An easy way to grade how much support you give your child is to hold their wrist vs. letting them hold your hand or finger. This allows you to control the support needed and making them work to their potential.

**ENCOURAGE THEM TO DO AS MUCH AS THEY CAN VS. YOU HOLDING THEIR HAND!!**



**The only way to learn HOW to walk up and down the stairs independently is to offer opportunities to practice!  
So.....put them down, let go of their hand and let them try to do it themselves!**

**.....OFFER HELP AS NEEDED, AND  
ALWAYS HAVE THEIR SAFETY FIRST!**