



## Pedestrian safety for children with vision impairments

Learning to be a safe pedestrian is an important part of your child's development and future independence. To help keep children safe it's important to work with them to:

- Develop understanding of left/right, parallel/perpendicular, near/far, fast/slow.
- Learn to use any remaining vision, hearing and other sensory skills to assist decision making.
- Wear bright or light coloured clothing.
- Allow enough time to cross the road, do not rush.

Think about the safest route:

- Audio tactile signalised crossings provide audio (beeping noise), visual (pedestrian lanterns) and tactile signals (felt by placing your hand on the button).
- Pedestrian signalised crossings help control traffic and indicate to the pedestrian when it is safe to cross.
- Marked crossings (zebra) have white or yellow lines which contrast with the road and often have a yellow sign identifying the crossing.
- Roads which do not have a marked or signalised pedestrian crossing can be unsafe to cross because traffic does not have to stop.

An Orientation and Mobility Specialist can provide assessments, training and aides to assist a child who is vision impaired to safely cross roads. Aides that may assist a person are:

- Long cane – This can identify to drivers that the person crossing the road is vision impaired, help determine the edge of the road and identify any potential hazards that may be in their path of travel.
- ID cane – As with a long cane this will identify to drivers that the person crossing is vision impaired and may have difficulty seeing approaching cars.
- Monocular – this is a visual aide that can assist a child who is vision impaired to identify approaching cars from a safe distance.

You can contact Vision Australia and Guide Dogs Victoria for assistance. These organisations employ Orientation and Mobility (O&M) specialists who are skilled in developing road safety and independent travel techniques with children who have vision impairments.

- **Vision Australia:** Children's Orientation & Mobility Services contact the National Contact Centre on 1300 84 74 66 or email [info@visionaustralia.org](mailto:info@visionaustralia.org)
- **Guide Dogs Victoria:** Children's Mobility Service contact the Referrals Officer on 03 9854 4467 or email [referrals@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:referrals@guidedogsvictoria.com.au)