Orientation and Mobility Paraprofessionals

Considerations:
An IEP recommendation for an Orientation and Mobility Paraprofessional (MP) should be considered when a student who is blind or visually impaired requires a guide to move safely from place to place during school activities, and requires reinforcement of orientation and mobility skills for safety and independent movement. The MP can only be assigned to a blind or visually impaired student. The MP cannot be assigned to a normally sighted student who has difficulty with ambulation. The MP is assigned primarily for safety, but also follows through with mobility instruction under the guidance of the Mobility Teacher (MT). The MT is a Certified Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired with additional university credentials in orientation and mobility. Educational Vision Services (EVS) trains Mobility Paraprofessionals in correct guiding techniques. Whenever possible, EVS teaches the MP Braille and other adaptive skills to help the blind and visually impaired student with instruction. However, the MP is assigned for safety reasons and not for instructional purposes.

Roles and Responsibilities:
Orientation and mobility paraprofessionals are responsible for:

- Guiding students using the techniques taught by the orientation and mobility teacher
- Monitoring students for safety throughout the school day – in classrooms, in special purpose rooms, in school hallways, on stairs, in elevators, and in the community - using the monitoring techniques established by the orientation and mobility teacher
- Encouraging students to use the techniques taught by the orientation and mobility teacher
- Guiding students to safety during fire drills and emergency evacuations
- Communicating immediately with the classroom teacher and orientation and mobility teacher about any and all concerns regarding safety and student performance
- Assisting in orientation and mobility lessons, as requested by the orientation and mobility teacher
- Working with the educational team for their student’s safety and maximum independence

Requisites for IEP Mandating and Assignment of an MP:
1. The student must be blind or severely visually impaired, as documented by a current report from an eye doctor.
2. The student must also be mandated for mobility teaching (MT). The student cannot be mandated for MP without also being mandated for MT.
3. There must be an Orientation and Mobility Evaluation in the IEP folder or in SESIS that recommends the provision of the Mobility Paraprofessional. The evaluation can only be done by a qualified expert in the field such as an Orientation and Mobility Teacher. Educational Vision Services will arrange for the evaluation upon request.