



## Information Sheet

### Buggies and strollers: a buyer's guide

When selecting a buggy (sometimes called a *stroller*) it is important to consider both the needs of the child and the parents/carers manoeuvring the buggy. A range of buggies is available which include features designed to support children with additional physical needs. A thoughtful selection will minimise the manual handling risks for parents/carers and provide the most comfortable ride for the child.



Features of the buggy to consider include:

#### Frame

- ▶ Weight—lightweight buggies are easier to lift and move about.
- ▶ Size and width—is the size of the buggy a good lifestyle fit? For example will a wide buggy fit through shopping aisles?
- ▶ Load capacity—ensure that the buggy will cater for the child as their weight increases over time.
- ▶ Ease of steering and manoeuvrability.
- ▶ Stability—avoid anything that can easily tip over—check how stability is affected if carry bags are added to the back of the buggy.
- ▶ Folding technique—check how easy it is to fold the buggy for transport including the location of release locks and difficulty of operation. Locks situated at the side are more accessible than those located beneath the seat.
- ▶ Size and shape once folded for transport—look for a buggy that is compact, easy to store and comfortable to lift/carry.

#### Wheels

- ▶ Size—large wheels are easier to handle over uneven terrain but can make the buggy more bulky for storage and increase the turning circle.
- ▶ Style—pneumatic (air-filled) tyres absorb impact better than solid tyres and provide a smoother ride for the child. However, pneumatic tyres can be punctured and require regular pumping and checking of inflation levels.
- ▶ Number of wheels—three wheeled buggies are generally more manoeuvrable but are less stable than their four wheeled counterparts.
- ▶ Swivelling wheels located at the front of the buggy make manoeuvring easier.
- ▶ If you are considering a reversible handle, look for swivel wheels at the rear as well as the front, with brakes mounted on all wheels.

## Backrest

- ▶ Recline or semi-recline functions are particularly useful for a sleeping child, whereas the upright position is more stimulating and functional when the child is awake.
- ▶ Check the ease of adjustment and number of recline positions available.

## Push Handle

- ▶ Height adjustability—this is a useful feature if more than one carer is going to be pushing the buggy.
- ▶ Reversible handle (four wheel buggies only)—enables the child to be positioned in either a forward facing or rear facing position. It is important to consider the location of the brakes and the manoeuvrability of the buggy when in the reverse position. A reversible seat may be an alternative choice.
- ▶ A tether strap to help carers retain control of the buggy—This is a mandatory requirement set by Standards Australia.

## Brakes

- ▶ Brakes that are linked by a bar need minimal effort to engage as only a single action is required.
- ▶ Foot brakes reduce bending and are generally easy to engage.
- ▶ All buggies must be fitted with red coloured brake/s. This is a safety standard set by Standards Australia.

## Harness

- ▶ All buggies must have a harness for the child's support and safety.
- ▶ Operation—needs to be easy to manipulate for the carer but not for the child.
- ▶ Support—the minimal amount of support considered should be a five point harness with two shoulder straps, a waist and crotch strap.
- ▶ Adjustable strap lengths—accommodates a growing child.

## Footrest

- ▶ A footrest reduces the chance of a child's feet being injured by being caught in a wheel or dragged along the ground.
- ▶ Foot cups keep feet in place (particularly if legs or feet are flaccid or spastic).
- ▶ Height adjustability allows for growth.

## Customisation Potential

- ▶ Advantages—enables specialised seating needs to be met as well as accommodating growth of the child.
- ▶ Inbuilt adjustability – some designs have in-built adjustability of seat depth, seat width, foot plate drop and angle, tilt of seat, recline of back rest, knee angle, and/or seat orientation.

- ▶ Supplier customisation—can a specialised pre-fabricated or custom made seating system be fitted?
- ▶ Seating supports – can the buggy accommodate head supports, lateral supports, pommels, postural supports and seating inserts?

## Maintenance

- ▶ Upholstery—is it removable for cleaning and can it be machine or hand-washed?
- ▶ Tyres—a pump should be kept handy as pneumatic tyres run the risk of puncture.

## Other Considerations

- ▶ Does the buggy comply with current Australian Standards?
- ▶ Are storage areas such as bags and pockets provided for items such as a handbag, shopping bags, food items, drink bottles etc?
- ▶ Are accessories for weather protection such as a sun canopy, boot cover or rain cover available?
- ▶ Warranty details and availability of servicing.

## Contacting the Independent Living Centre

For further information or to make an appointment to visit the display please contact the Independent Living Centre. The Independent Living Centre offers free advice on equipment and techniques to help you with everyday tasks.

Independent Living Centre

11 Blacks Road

Gilles Plains SA 5086

Phone: 1300 885 886 (SA & NT callers only) or 8266 5260

Fax: 8266 5263

Email: [ilcsa@dfc.sa.gov.au](mailto:ilcsa@dfc.sa.gov.au)

Website: [www.sa.gov.au/disability/ilc](http://www.sa.gov.au/disability/ilc)

Accessible off street parking is available.

Bus routes:

From the city T500/T501 or 207/208 to Stop 28 Sudholz Road

Timetable information: 8210 1000



