Safe Mobility Times
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Miss Belle of Texas Accessorizes with Pediatric Belt Cane

Kenedi Creed became the Texas State Ambassador for the Belle and Beast Pageant. She is almost three years old and blind due to optic nerve hypoplasia (ONH). Kenedi’s mom took the winning photo of her daughter who regularly models for designer clothing lines and her mother’s jewelry business. Kenedi plans to use her platform to raise awareness of the abilities of children born with disabilities—anything is possible!
Andrea is a social media influencer with a large following on platforms such as TikTok. She posts about her life as a single mother raising two children, one of whom is blind. Through her posts and advocacy, she has helped to raise awareness and introduce effective products and resources to many families of children born with ONH; including the pediatric belt cane!

Kenedi’s belt cane was a donation made by a fellow Texan. We thank Andrea and all our donors and supporters who keep making important contributions and taking positive actions to change the public understanding of visual impairment and blindness.

**Board Member Highlight!**

**Professor Anne Corn**

![](image)

Anne Corn, Ed.D., is professor emerita of Vanderbilt University and researcher at the University of Cincinnati Department of Ophthalmology. In 2012, she was inducted into the Texas Women’s Hall of Fame in recognition of the positive impact she has had for many thousands of students who are blind and visually impaired and their teachers throughout Texas, across the United States and around the world.

Anne Corn is a visionary within the field of blindness and visual impairment. She has worked as an educator, researcher, and advocate. Her groundbreaking contributions in low vision have changed the way children born with visual impairments are educated. She is and will forever be celebrated for her work bringing low vision devices into the classrooms of elementary, middle, and high school students with low vision to allow them immediate access to their visual environment.

She has served on the boards of multiple organizations, including Prevent Blindness Texas. Safe Toddlers is so proud to have Professor Anne Leslie Corn as an honorary board member! She brings to Safe Toddlers a wealth of knowledge in the field of visual impairment, important experience in nonprofit work, and a true belief in our mission — so much so she helped us to craft Safe Toddlers’ mission statement.
which reads: To provide toddlers who are blind with a solution for walking safely – a pediatric belt cane.

Safe Mobility Moment

Dear Grace:

We love the pediatric belt cane and so does Henry who is blind and age 2. When does he need to wear his cane, should he continue to use it at home?

Sincerely.
Wanting only the best in Arizona

Dear Wanting only the best in Arizona:

Thank you for reaching out and this great question! We have a saying - when the lights are on, the belt cane's on. That’s because we view the pediatric belt cane as having the same function a light bulb has for sighted toddlers. Sighted people need light to see the path ahead, to feel safe and to avoid most obstacles. After sunrise, sighted people rely on sunlight. After sunset they rely on artificial light. Sighted people use light in their familiar homes and in unfamiliar places. Sighted people like me never think twice about whether we "need light" to see for safety - we just use it all the time.

Incandescent light bulbs fueled the industrial revolution. Light bulbs allowed the workers to work longer hours. Without light, they could not work easily or move about with the same confidence. A sighted toddler needs an adult to turn on the light switch and a blind toddler needs an adult to put the belt cane on him, at home and everywhere.

Thus, our recommendation is Henry can wear his belt cane most of the day, every day because wearing the belt cane, is like turning on the lights. We turn on the lights in our own home, so we need to wear our belt canes at home, too.

We’re here to help!

Sincerely,
Grace and the Safe Toddlers Team

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Helpful Hints

Quick-Start Guide to Your New Pediatric Belt Cane

NEVER USE THE BELT WITHOUT THE FRAME. The pediatric belt cane is custom-made to fit your child. For gradual introduction, introduce wearing the belt cane as a unit. It is either all on or all off.

The child gets no benefit from the belt alone, therefore walking with just the belt is the wrong goal. The only goal is walking with both the belt and the frame, all benefit is from the frame. The more your child wears the belt cane as a unit the better the acceptance.

As children grow, they will need their next larger size belt canes until they are able to transition to hand-held mobility tools. Older children are able to disconnect and reconnect the frame independently. This helps them transition to begin pushing it as a rectangular cane. The most important outcome is that they use a safe mobility tool every day, most of the day.

Goal: Wear the belt cane every day, most of the day.

Belt: The belt works best when it is snug. The size is correct when the belt ends close only half-way. The fastener has an extraordinarily strong grip and takes a strong pinch to close securely.

Two cane frames:

1) The longer frame design is the daily frame. It is the correct length for your child’s height and recommended to be used the most. If there are any drop-offs (curbs, stairs) the daily frame gives the most warning. The daily frame tips’ metal glides move across most surfaces.

2) The shorter, tight spaces cane, frame is designed for use in living rooms that contain furniture with legs. This shorter frame does not have metal glide material on the tips and the angle of the frame is less forgiving, that’s why it is recommended only for use in small, cramped spaces.

For example, in a large indoor mall, the daily frame is recommended.

Q. Does my child have to hold on to the frame?
A. If it is within your child’s developmental potential your child will eventually reach down and begin to control the frame, however this does not have to happen right away. Independent control of the cane frame can be encouraged. A child who is not yet able to independently right the frame or get it unstuck will need adult assistance and instruction.
Q. What lessons does a child need to learn how to wear the belt cane most of the day?
A. Allow child to stand still, twist, sway and bang the cane.
B. Help child learn to regain balance,
C. get unstuck, backup,
D. locate a clear path,
E. contact and investigate objects with the cane frame,
F. keep the tips on the floor.

During O&M lessons: ask child to walk to a destination for a specific purpose – (e.g., to engage in an activity, once there).

Avoid simply asking child to “walk”, instead say, “let’s go to the toy room and find your ball so we can play bounce ball.”

**Goal:** child to independently sit down and stand up from the floor, at a table. There are videos on [www.safetoddlers.org/belt-cane-how-to](http://www.safetoddlers.org/belt-cane-how-to) that show various ways young children learned to stand up wearing their belt canes and other skills.
Pause for Fun

Sudoku Puzzle
The object of the game is to fill all the blank squares with the correct numbers. Each row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Each column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Each 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9. (solution included at the end of the newsletter)

As an orientation and mobility specialist - solving puzzles is a lot like teaching orientation, or rather - re-orienting after becoming disoriented.

Orientation is a cognitive activity that builds the brain's muscle.

Getting lost and learning to find your way is an important activity to experience and practice. In fact, one outcome of wearing the belt cane is the more children who are blind gain self-confidence the more likely they are to wander away from the group.

This means they need to learn the rules!

Orientation strategies: Stay with the group, tell a grown up when you feel lost, know the "meet up location" - a place to wait if we get separated.

Learn your phone number or better yet- learn to use a smart phone to call mom.
Podcast Update

We finished our March of COMS selection and they are ready for listening on our website [www.safetoddles.org/podcast](http://www.safetoddles.org/podcast) or anywhere you get your podcast.

Our final COMS interview had technical issues. We will be able to post it soon.

April podcast is devoted to families who use the belt cane. Please check our website each Monday to get the weekly installment. Schedule below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>June Allison, North Carolina</td>
<td>Her son, Caeden, is two years old and visually impaired due to cortical visual impairment. She discusses how much he has grown to depend upon the belt cane to move about freely.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Kylie Quave, Virginia</td>
<td>Her son, Matias, is blind due to Leber's Congenital amaurosis. At 20 months he began using belt canes for two years. She contributed one of the largest video records on our website of her families' experiences with the belt cane.</td>
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<td>April 19</td>
<td>Andrea Loyd, Texas</td>
<td>Her daughter, Kenedi, is age two and blind due to optic nerve hypoplasia. They contribute to a page on the website through Tik Tok videos.</td>
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<td>April 26</td>
<td>Ashley Zeliner, Wisconsin</td>
<td>Her son, Damien has minimal peripheral vision due to Norrie's Disease. He was able to transition from walking only with a rear walker, to combo rear walker and belt cane, to belt cane only.</td>
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How to Obtain a Cane

Purchase a cane - $180* per cane set - cane ships approximately in three to five weeks.

Free Canes - We are committed providing free canes to any child in need, because belt canes are essential safety equipment that enables toddlers with visual impairments to develop to their full potential.

Option one - provide videos and feedback - cane ships in two to three months.

Safe Toddlers seeks families and professionals to join our video library by contributing before and with belt cane videos. These videos assist in improving belt cane design, demonstrating outcomes to potential users and demonstrates the abilities of toddlers and preschoolers who are blind once they acquire consistently safe mobility.

Everyone who is obtaining a pediatric belt cane is encouraged to consider participating by submitting videos to us - we need you!

Option two - Submit measurements and a free pediatric belt cane ships in four to six months.

*Limited quantity of reduced cost cane sets available to families (submit in-take form, use buy now to pay with a credit/debit card)

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PLEASE DONATE A PEDIATRIC BELT CANE TODAY!

Help Safe Toddlers give children who are blind the freedom of independent mobility.

www.safetoddlers.org/donate

Sudoku solution

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9 2 5 7 1 3 8 6 4
7 4 1 2 8 6 9 5 3
6 3 8 4 9 5 7 1 2
3 9 7 6 2 4 5 8 1
8 5 2 9 7 1 3 4 6
1 6 4 3 5 8 2 9 7
4 8 6 5 3 2 1 7 9
5 7 3 1 6 9 4 2 8
2 1 9 8 4 7 6 3 5
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