

Wheelchair Accessible Van Conversions

What to Consider when selecting a van:

What size van do you need?

Minivan

Dodge Caravan is the van typically recommended for conversion, although other minivans can be converted but may be more expensive. The vehicle needs to be a newer model for some funding sources to assist (maximum 5 years old). Van conversion consists of lowering the floor of the van, having a fold out ramp installed at the rear or side of the vehicle along with a tie down system.

Rear Entry



Side Entry



Full size van

Full size van allows for greater size and head room. A lift is installed, which may be side or rear entry. There are various models of lifts including ones that are housed inside the van or under the van.



When selecting a van consider:

How many will need to travel in the van on a regular basis?

Do you need to transport other items frequently such as medical equipment, walkers etc.?

Will the system meet the long-term needs of your family? (Consider a 10-year life span of vehicle)?

What to Consider when selecting rear versus side entry conversion

Parking - Consider your parking space at home as well as places that you frequent.

Rear entry -Do you park places where access to the side might be an issue (e.g. parking lot style)?

Side entry- Do you do a lot of curb parking (in which access to the back of the van may be limited by a vehicle parked behind)?

Proximity of the child –

Side entry allows the child to be close to the driver and front passenger - Does your child need to sit close to you to quickly reach him/her from the front seat (e.g., in case of medical need such as seizure, choking, postural adjustment, behaviour , to comfort, retrieve dropped objects etc.)?

Rear entry allows for ease of entry (e.g., don't have to turn the wheelchair). Would there usually be others in the van who could attend to your child's needs?

Other Passengers – how much room do you need in your vehicle to accommodate other passengers?

Consider the configuration of seating inside the van.

Service

Check with your vendor re specific makes of vans and any limitations on age of secondhand vehicles.

Ask the vendor if they will assist with the purchase of the vehicle and the conversion or if you are required to purchase a van and bring it to their location for the conversion. Also inquire about the type

of warrantee and servicing is required for the adaption you're looking at, how often. Will they come to you or do you have to travel to them?

Funding/Cost

Consider your financial resources as well as funding options. Funding options may differ between minivans and full size vans and should be explored at the time of decision-making. President's Choice may assist with funding of the van. March of Dimes may assist with the cost of the conversion depending on annual income.

If you have any questions please contact Occupational Therapist Beverley Denton (ext., 185) or Social Worker Marina Greco (ext. 116).

Name of Child: _____

Date: _____