

POSITIONING FOR SWITCH USE

When using the switch, consideration must be given to the switch placement. The helper, in consultation with the consulting therapist (OT, SLP, PT) must take into consideration the following:

- **Student's Position**
- **Switch access**
- **Type of switch**
- **Switch position**

STUDENT'S POSITION

The way in which your Student is positioned affects his/her ability to use volitional movements.

The student may...

- be in his/her wheelchair,
- lying on his/her tummy over a wedge,
- in his/her standing frame, or
- lying on his/her side.
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It is important for your Student that both home and school be able to offer them the same degree of independence using the switch regardless of their positioning. The switch must be in easy access and reach for your student whatever position is most comfortable for him/her.

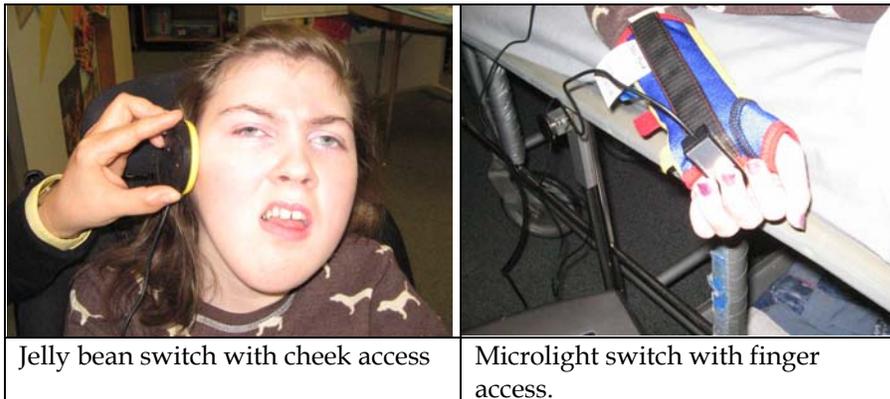
HOW WILL YOUR STUDENT ACCESS THE SWITCH?

Once your student's positioning has been established, the team (in consultation with the therapist,) will need to decide how s/he will access the switch.

Examples...

- Lifting hand or sliding hand
- Touching with a finger
- Squeezing
- Using another body part:
 - Elbow
 - Face
 - Leg
 - Foot
 - Head

The following are some examples...



The type of switch used is usually dependent upon the student's ability to activate the switch.

Remember to take into consideration:

- Your student's motor control
- When your student will be accessing the switch
- What the switch is operating
- Where the switch will be placed

SWITCH TYPE

There are a variety of switches available. The type of switch your student use will also be an important factor in determining the both your student's positioning and the position of switch (switch site)

Please refer to website reference 'Switch Type'

POSITION OF THE SWITCH

The positioning and mounting of a switch will be determined by:

- The volitional movement demonstrated by your student
- How your student will be accessing the switch (where on the body)
- The type of switch that the team decides the choose
- The physical condition of your student (e.g. muscle tone, strength etc.)
- How portable the switch needs to be (e.g. do you need to be able to move the switch to another site)
- What other equipment the student is required to have (e.g. if your student is in a wheelchair, a universal mounting arm may be too cumbersome and therefore may affect where you plan to place the switch)

Switches may be mounted:

- On a wheelchair
- On a wheelchair tray
- On a stander or walker
- On a desk
- Directly strapped to your student's hand

Switches can be adjusted or adapted to meet your student's needs by:

- Angling the switch towards or away from your student
- Securing the switch to a particular site (for easy movement, providing your student does not hit the switch too hard)
- Adjusting the height of the switch
- Putting overlays on the switch face for visual interest
- Putting different sensory input on the face of the switch

REMEMBER...

Wherever the student's team decides to place the switch, it is important to question whether your student's **movement, type of switch** and **switch position**

- is voluntary both on and off (often the latter is the more difficult),
- is repeatable,
- is easy and energy efficient, and
- reduces or eliminates accidental hits.