

# A Guide to Selecting a Stroller or Buggy



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Assistive technology (AT) is a piece of equipment, device or system that provides people with practical solutions to everyday life activities. You can search our National Equipment Database [www.askned.com.au](http://www.askned.com.au) to view a range of products online.

When selecting a stroller or buggy it is important to consider both the needs of the child and the people who will be responsible for manoeuvring and folding the buggy. It is recommended to consult your Occupational Therapist to help in the selection of an appropriate stroller/buggy for your child. Considering your child's needs and the environments of use will help identify the features you will need.

## Considerations

### The needs of your child

- Do they require postural support?
- What style of harnesses do they require?
- How robust must the stroller/buggy be?
- How long will they be spending in the stroller/buggy?
- What activities will be undertaken whilst using the stroller/buggy? I.e., sleeping, at mealtimes or taking medication.

### Where and how will the stroller / buggy be used

- Will it be used indoors or outdoors?
- Will the terrain be uneven?
- Who will be pushing the stroller/buggy?
- Does it need to be transported in a car?
- Will it fit in the boot?

## Standard stroller features

### Frame

- Overall size and width: will it fit where you need to go? e.g. shopping centre aisles, public toilets, hallways.
- Load capacity: will it cater for the child's weight as they grow?
- Stability: avoid anything that will easily tip. Check how stability is affected by adding carry bags or items you would have with the stroller.
- Folding technique: how easy it is to fold and lift? Generally, the more supports you require for posture, the more difficult folding will be.
- Weight: Lightweight frames are easier to lift and manoeuvre.

### Wheels

- Larger wheels are easier to handle over uneven terrain and will provide a smoother ride for the child. However, they increase bulk when folded.
- Pneumatic (air filled) tyres absorb impact better than solid tyres. However, pneumatic tyres require regular pumping up and can puncture.
- Stroller/buggies with three wheels are generally more manoeuvrable but are less stable than those with four wheels.

### Seating System

- Some strollers have separate seating system that can be removed from the frame.
- How easy is it to remove the seating system?
- Can the seating system fit onto other bases if required e.g., Hi-Low bases?

### Backrest

- Recline increases the angle between the hip and back, allowing the child to lie back in the stroller. This can be used when the child is sleeping or resting in the stroller or for a change in position, however, it can affect the position of the harness.



- An upright position is needed for engaging in play, communicating, and feeding.
- Check the ease of adjustment and available reclining positions.

### Tilt

- Seat tilt shifts the entire seat position back, without changing their hip to back angle. It can be useful to change the position of the child to assist with head control, posture, transferring and positioning.
- Can allow the child to sleep or rest.

### Brakes

- How easy is it to operate the brakes?
- Foot brakes reduce bending.
- Ensure they are easy to operate and are visually obvious.

### Harness

- All strollers and buggies require a harness for support and safety.

### Footrest

- Footrests reduce the chance of a child's feet being injured or dragging along the ground.
- They also help the child to maintain a good overall posture in the stroller.

### Postural Support and Customisation

- Some strollers will have options of postural supports, including head supports, chest supports, and hip supports. It is recommended to seek professional advice relating to your child's needs.
- Inbuilt adjustability to accommodate your growing child: Some strollers/buggies have in-built growth and adjustability.
- Seat depth and seat width, footplate Height and angle, backrest height, postural supports and recline can often be adjusted.
- Customisation: Some specialized prefabricated seating systems or custom-made seating systems can be fitted to some stroller bases.

## Other Considerations

- Is the upholstery easy to remove for cleaning and can it be washed?
- Consider warranty, servicing requirements and future repairs. Is local support available for servicing/repairs?
- Are accessories such as sun canopies, rain covers and under-seat baskets available?
- Is a stroller the most appropriate option? For older children a manual wheelchair may be more age appropriate.

## Professional Advice

With such a large range of strollers available it is recommended to seek occupational therapy advice to assist in finding a suitable stroller for your child's needs. Occupational therapists can assist you in these areas by providing:

- Information and advice on the range of strollers and options available.
- Assessment, trials, prescription, set up and training for you and your child

Find out more about a wide range of helpful products and devices on NED, our National Equipment Database at [askned.com.au](http://askned.com.au). Need help with NED? Call our helpline on 1800 885 886.

Our experienced health professionals can also assist in providing strategies and advice on finding and using the right product for you.

Call us on 9381 0600 or complete an appointment request form via our website at [www.indigo.org.au](http://www.indigo.org.au)

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