

Client: Emma

Therapist: Elizabeth McCarty, OT at the Aaron W Perlman Center

Location: Cincinnati, OH

Date: Fall 2005

Chair Model: Koala Miniflex—"the chair to be a child with"

Emma's Story: Emma is four years old. She is a very intelligent, fun-loving, independent little girl. She has Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), which presents weak muscles, low trunk and head control, and limited movement. At age two, she started training with a power wheelchair – she became a proficient driver in a matter of a few weeks.

In her wheelchair, Emma is virtually in constant motion. She drives around the house, in the yard, at school, and anywhere else the family travels. She likes her independence and uses her wheelchair control to access her computer for school work.

Currently her little brother, who is two and also has SMA, is

learning to drive using his own Koala, recently fitted to him.

Main Objectives: The main objective was to give Emma **independent mobility** so she can get around on her own, and follow her own decisions.

The family and the evaluating team were looking for a system that can provide **comfort** and prolonged sitting tolerance. **Access** to a variety of surface heights, **maneuverability**, ability to get around outdoors as well as indoors, can easily interface with a computer were also important goals. And finally, the ability to **integrate** well with an environment of other children through aesthetics and appropriate seat to floor height.



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Wheelchair System

The Koala Miniflex with an HMC Mini joystick was chosen with the following features in mind:

- The seat to floor height is only 14.5", enabling Emma to be on peer level.
- An integrated, combined actuator both tilts and elevates her. The elevation allows her to get up to the family dining table, her school desk, and other higher surfaces. The tilt allows her to lay back and relax, so she does not need to transfer out of the chair when she fatigues. The two features use one single actuator, funding was easier to obtain—only power tilt needs justification. *Cont'd on back page*

connections

Getting the most from your wheelchair system

"I like that it's small and compact, because we have two of them." Emma's mom, Beth

The Koala Miniflex with an HMC Mini joystick was chosen with the following features in mind:

The front wheel drive system lends her excellent maneuverability within the house, which is further enhanced by the small size of the base (only 22" wide). It also offers better outdoor abilities, such as going through grass, gravel, or small obstacles.

- The **Miniflex** seating provides with a soft, cushy feeling to make Emma feel comfortable in the system. It also offers appropriate positioning accessories, such as lateral trunk supports to help her maintain midline posture.
- The **HMC** mini joystick responds to a very light touch and needs very little exertion to make the

wheelchair move. This is a perfect match as a regular joystick would require too much force for Emma to utilize. She also has a **Microlite** switch to change mode, which also requires only a very little effort to activate.

A simple, economical interface, called the **MouseMover** provides an interface which can turn the joystick's control into a computer mouse. When Emma does her school work on a computer, she can use her joystick to provide directions of the cursor, and her Microlite switch to activate (left click) the mouse.



Single lever brake release



Cover up to 16 miles on a single battery charge (up to 5 MPH)



Optional bumper an ideal safety accommodation for beginner drivers

KOALA MINIFLEX SMARTER DECISION



A mother's confession: Beth, Emma's mother stated "I like that it's small and compact, because we have two of them. I like the raising up feature and the laying back feature – the laying back helps when they get tired. Then I can drive them and they can rest."

"Before Emma got her chair she was immobile and needed constant assistance to move where she wanted to go. Now she drives around, she plays with other kids, she throws temper tantrums."



The Power of Mobility

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The **Koala**, Permobil's smallest pediatric wheelchair, is designed with a small child in mind. It is an excellent choice to experience mobility for the first time. It is small, maneuvers easily and intuitively, and handles outdoors well – all in all, it is a rugged little chair with the looks that are a perfect match for a child. It has several added features and the ability to accommodate growth. For more information about the Koala or any other Pediatric power wheelchair, please contact us at 800.736.0925