Random Parts and Ingenuity Equal Future Mobility | CPD

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AT lab assistant Tom Boman (right) helps adjust a pediatric stander for two-year-old Jaele Bennett.

Two-year old Jaele Bennet was born with brittle-bone disease, preventing her from learning to stand and walk. Jaele has metal rods in both femurs and in her left tibia, said her mom, Stacey. Because Jaele’s left leg is badly bowed, it is hard for her to walk, so she sits and scoots one hip forward at a time, Stacey said. Scooting accommodates both legs. “Young kids who don’t have mobility lose socialization and don’t get it back,” said Shaun Dahle, physical therapist and supervisor at Logan Regional Pediatric Rehabilitation program. Dahle approached the AT Lab to see if a pediatric stander could be built to help Jaele learn to stand and develop proper muscle strength to walk. Using various parts from around the lab, including an old crutch which allows the device to adjust as Jaele grows, a stander was built to her specific needs. The stander gradually forces Jaele to a full-upright position. The best part is, the device cost around $100 to build—a drop in the bucket compared to the thousands of dollars a stander from off the market would cost. “This is ingenious. The whole thing is just perfect,” Stacey said. Another unique feature includes vinyl paint on the foam back to prevent bacteria growing and to make it easy to clean. Paint squiggles in primary colors help make the device look less industrial and a bit more kid-friendly.

Tom Boman, AT Lab Assistant, helped build the device. He said, “The cool thing about this project is how a few pieces of seemingly random parts came together to make something that is really helping this little girl.” A version of this story first appeared in the UATP May newsletter here.