



**PACE, Inc.**

Fact sheet: **What Is Visitability?**

Most homes have steps at every entrance, and have bathroom doors that are narrower than other interior passage doors. VISIBLE homes have:

- one entrance with zero steps
- 32 inches clear passage through all interior doors, **including bathrooms**
- at least a half bath (preferably a full bath) on the main floor

Visible homes are deliberately designed with basic access for residents who do NOT have disabilities.

**What Are The Benefits?**

Homes in the community can **welcome guests** who use wheelchairs or walkers, or have some other form of mobility impairment.

Residents are more likely to be able to **remain in their existing homes**, rather than having to move out or do extensive, expensive renovation, if a family member develops a disability. **All residents find it easier** to bring in baby strollers, grocery carts, heavy furniture.....

**Sale and re-sale of the homes is enhanced** in an era where the senior demographic is growing rapidly and baby boomers are attracted to homes that welcome their aging parents and provide easy-use homes for themselves.

Visitability features **cost little up front**---unlike the higher after-the-fact cost of renovation for widening doors and adding ramps.

Visitability features are **easy to construct** on most terrain, visually unnoticeable, and allow increased flexibility in selling or renting homes. On new construction, a zero-step entrance can usually be incorporated without a "ramp" by grading so that the sidewalk meets the porch.

**More On Doors**

All interior passage doors need to be a minimum of 2'8", which leaves 30" clear space. 2'10" doors are much better, leaving 32 inches of clear passage space, and are increasingly available because that is the width required by the Fair Housing Amendment in new multi-family dwellings. 3'0" doors are excellent where space permits. Special attention needs to be paid to the bathroom door because this is the one typically smaller than other doors on house plans. It's not essential (although it can be helpful) to have a large turning radius inside a residential bathroom; in a small bathroom, the wheelchair user can roll in forward and roll out backward. But it is essential to have at least a 32" clear path to the commode. The bathroom door can be hinged to swing out rather than in to give a person using a wheelchair enough room to shut the door when inside the room.

**Do any developments already incorporate visitability?**

**Yes.** For more information go to Concretechange.org a project of the Georgia Statewide Independent Living Council <http://www.concretechange.org/>