Teaching Children with Cerebral Palsy

by Misty Faucheux

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Teaching children with cerebral palsy (CP) involves a special set of skills, because the condition is chronic, and children with cerebral palsy have trouble coordinating muscle movements.

**CP Therapists**

Teaching children with cerebral palsy often involves a team of people. Physical therapists familiar with cerebral palsy are needed to help children develop motor skills. Speech therapists assist children with cerebral palsy to speak and listen.

Finally, a general education teacher is needed. Sometimes, a child’s cerebral palsy may be so severe that parents need to send their child to a special school that concentrates in teaching children with cerebral palsy. Teachers at these schools are specially trained to deal with children with special needs kids.

**Individualized Education Programs**

But, whether it’s a parent or a trained instructor teaching a child with cerebral palsy, patience and understanding are needed. Tests are also crucial to determine how severe the cerebral palsy is and what the child’s mental capacity is as this will affect how the child develops. Knowing these facts also assists with creating individualized education programs geared towards the child.

The early years of teaching children with cerebral palsy involve helping students learn basic movements and helping them focus. Children need to have some control over major muscle groups and some small motor control to maximize their ability to live with the condition.

If their condition is not too severe, children with cerebral palsy should be encouraged to participate in mainstream activities, including sports. Also, children who are high-functioning should be encouraged to participate in public or private schools that don’t cater exclusively to special needs children. Often, only minor modifications are needed in order to accommodate them.

Parents are often fearful to allow their children with cerebral palsy to enter regular schools, but it will benefit the child in the long run. They will be exposed to mainstream culture and expectations, which will assist the child with cerebral palsy in the growth process.

[The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](http://www.cia.gov) has standards for educators teaching children with cerebral palsy and other conditions in public schools. These teachers will have training in teaching children with developmental disabilities.

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