



Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is usually caused by abnormal brain development, injury or infection during or before birth and affects movement and coordination.

CP may result in problems with vision, hearing, swallowing and communication. It may also cause seizures and difficulties with learning and behaviour.

CP is the most common physical impairment in children around the world. It is not caused by witchcraft or bad luck. It cannot be cured by traditional healers.

Children with CP can learn and develop. This is helped by providing early support such as playing games, talking and singing with your child and helping them to do things independently such as feeding, handling toys and other objects and moving around (walking or using an assistive device such as crutches or a wheelchair).

At school, many children with CP learn to read, write and do other activities successfully. Many people with CP complete higher education, have jobs and get married. Rehabilitation with occupational, speech and physiotherapists is often very helpful.

Some signs of cerebral palsy are:

- Muscle weakness (floppy) or stiffness
- Uncontrolled or shaky movements
- Delayed development
- Reduced balance and coordination
- Limited mobility, including the need for a wheelchair or walking frame.

CP will present differently in each child. Sometimes it will affect only half of the body, only affect the legs and or both the legs and arms.

If a person with CP is not encouraged to move, their body can develop contractures (bent elbows, hips and knees). This can be painful and hinder future development and independence.

It is important to have your child seen by a health professional to provide appropriate advice and referrals

Additional resource:

Cerebral Palsy Factsheet and training resource for parents, free online: https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/CBM_Cerebral_Palsy_Prevention_Toolkit_EN.pdf

"All schools shall promote fair and equitable access to education for all learners with disabilities regardless of their gender, age, social status, economic background, geographical location, race, ethnicity, religious background, sexual orientation and gender identity, or intersections between these factors."

(MoE, Special and Inclusive Education Policy)

"Every person has the right to early childhood education, primary and secondary education and further education."

(Fiji Constitution)

Who can help? Your nearest health centre, the hospital in your division and your community health worker. For additional help you can contact the <https://www.frankhilton.org.fj/> and <https://www.facebook.com/spinalinjuryfiji/>

Produced as part of the **Toolkit for Disability-Inclusive Education – Fiji** - Issued June, 2023.
Please note that this document is for informational/education purposes only and does not replace medical advice.



Ministry of Education

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